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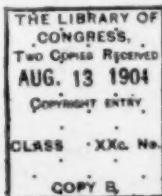
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A NEW BONNET FOR MARY

By Caroline Duer

"MY dear Colonel," said Mrs. Selwin, turning majestically in her chair, "the truth of the matter is I cannot manage my granddaughter, and I want your advice. Yes, you may smoke," as she observed him hesitate to light his cigar at the little silver lamp presented by the butler. "I know what men are without their cigars after luncheon. And you'll have a liqueur—where are the liqueurs, Sampson? Why are they not brought up?"

"You forgot to give me the key, madam," said Sampson, in the toneless voice of one resentful of long injury.

Mrs. Selwin reddened and the Colonel hastily declared he never touched anything in the middle of the day except the modest glass of claret and water he had already consumed.

"I suppose he and the footman finished it between them," remarked Mrs. Selwin, as the door closed on the butler. "I dare say they came to blows about it, too, for I noticed a bad bruise on Sampson's cheek yesterday, which he couldn't satisfactorily account for. And to tell me I never gave him the key! Why, here it is in my pocket, all the time! Really, most extraordinary! Well, as I say, one can't be too careful about locking up things. I suppose you saw by the papers that I had had a jewel case stolen out of my cabin the day we landed from Europe. All carelessness, my dear. Left my maid to look after things, she went to help Geraldine in the next cabin, and when she came back the box was gone. Everybody was leaving the ship; it could not be traced. The maid went into hysterics

and gave warning because I scolded her, and Sampson, who, it seems, wanted to marry her, has been in the sulks ever since. You remember that woman? She came to me from your sister. Honest as the day, but so incompetent! They always are when they're honest. I had had her for five years. Well, as I was saying, I offered a large reward, but the police are idiots. I shall never hear of my diamonds again. Such a fuss and notoriety as it entailed, too! It was a lesson to me," ended Mrs. Selwin, dropping the key back into her pocket. "I lock up everything now."

"Except your granddaughter," suggested the Colonel, who liked to stick to the point and who had heard the story of the lost jewels before.

"Ah, yes, Geraldine. That's what I want to consult you about. I wish I *could* lock her up sometimes, I declare! I don't know what to do with her. She has no idea of conventionality, and here she is over seventeen and coming out this Winter. She doesn't want to know the right people, she doesn't care to do the right things. All she wants is to be out in the open air, riding or walking or skating all day long, and Mademoiselle is tired out trying to follow her. Yesterday the poor thing had a headache, and Geraldine escaped early in the afternoon and was gone until long after tea time, all alone, heaven knows where!"

"You don't tell me so!" exclaimed the Colonel, seeing that he was expected to say something.

"She wouldn't give any account of herself, except to say that she had been for a very long walk, got belated,

hadn't any car-fare, and had to tramp all the way home, tired as she was. Now, that's all wrong! So unprotected, you know," concluded Mrs. Selwin.

The Colonel shook his head solemnly, as one lately become the sharer of a burden of responsibility.

"You remonstrated seriously, I trust," he said.

"Yes; and when I remonstrate with her she says: 'Oh, Granny, you did very well without all this when you were a young girl, growing up with the West, and see what a fine woman you have turned out. Why shouldn't I go out alone?' It is always the same thing: 'Why shouldn't I do this? Why shouldn't I do that?' 'My dear,' I say, 'because it isn't *done*. Nice girls are not allowed to run wild in this way.' 'But, Granny, where's the harm?' she says. And half the time there isn't any real harm, you know; only, of course, I can't have her flying about the streets alone after dusk. Now, what would you do? I kept her up stairs to-day so that we might discuss freely. What would you do?"

"Marry her," said the Colonel, in the tone of one accustomed to give the word of command; "marry her off at once."

"But, my dear Colonel, she's only——"

"At once!" repeated that gentleman, emphatically. "If she once gets her head nobody will be able to manage her. Never let a colt or a child get out of your hand. I never allowed my son to get out of mine. Disciplined all the wilfulness out of *him* when he was a child. Miss Geraldine has grown to be a girl of spirit; it takes a man to manage a girl of spirit. Is she good-looking? I haven't seen her since you took her abroad, but I know what *you* were at her age, and, by gad! if Selwin had not married you when he did, there's no telling how much harm you'd have done with your handsome, headstrong ways."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mrs. Selwin, bridling and laughing, "if I

had not known you since you were a boy, I should be offended."

"Not a bit, not a bit!" said the Colonel. "Too good friends for that, I hope. Always were when we were children, and are now no less so, I trust, though I am an old father and you a young grandmother."

He held out his hand, and Mrs. Selwin put hers into it. They sat silent for a few moments, looking at each other, their eyes full of kindly reminiscences.

The Colonel's were blue and fiery, his yellowish-white mustache drooped well over his obstinate upper lip. There was a frosty sparkle in the gray curls of his hair and a frosty pink in the coloring of his thin, bony visage.

Mrs. Selwin was of a robust and vigorous build—a woman of "fine presence." Her broad, handsome face was surmounted by curls and twists of almost suspiciously black hair, and her expression suggested the unrestrained temper and tenderness of a spoilt child; and a spoilt child she still was, ruling her household with a mixture of undue indulgence and unjust severity which was constantly producing the most astounding results.

"Well, well," she said, settling herself back in her armchair after a short pause, and sighing in a whole-souled way that caused an ominous creaking among the seams of her rich silk dress, "who would you suggest as a husband for Geraldine?"

"My son," returned Colonel Herford, promptly. "Why not? He is of a suitable age; he is likely to inherit a considerable fortune from me if he conducts himself according to my wishes. He is extremely good-looking, I may even say the fellow's handsome. And as I told you, I have had him under the strictest discipline since he was a boy."

"And where is he now?" Mrs. Selwin inquired, with some curiosity. "I haven't seen him since his school days."

At this question a deeper pink suffused the features of the Colonel. He was seized with a sudden fit of coughing.

"I—hem!—I am not at this moment able to say—hem!" he replied. "He—that is, I—I was unable to approve of some violently democratic articles he published in the paper of his college. I wrote a severe letter; he answered me with argument—me, his father! A confounded clever letter, too, the young scamp, expounding his views. His views! He had the audacity to assert that no young man was worthy of an education who had not worked his way through college, and all the time the rascal was living in the most luxurious rooms, on the fat of the land, on his allowance; in other words, at my expense. 'What do you mean by this damned nonsense?' I wrote. 'Whose money are you living on?' 'I mean just what I say,' he answered. 'I've had more money than was good for me all my life. It's weakening. I'd have done better without it. And to prove that I'm in earnest, I'll leave Cambridge at once, and I won't come back until I've made enough at least to pay for my last year at the law school.' With that he gives up his rooms, sells his furniture, and decamps before I can reach Boston. The deuce knows where he has gone or what he is doing. But I shall find him. I've got a clue, and I mean to follow it up. And, by Jove! I admire his spirit; I admire his spirit, confound him!"

An awkward remark anent the astonishing results of discipline was hovering on Mrs. Selwin's lips, but she suppressed it with not too obvious effort, and inquired instead how the Colonel meant to set about following his clue.

A sly smile overspread that gentleman's face. He unbuttoned his frock coat, settled his tie, pulled down his waistcoat, and thrusting his hands into his trousers pockets, leaned back in his chair with the air of one whose cleverness, although a mere matter of habit to himself, is not infrequently a surprise to his less gifted friends.

"Why, these things are not very difficult to an old fellow who knows the world," he said. "I saw his initials at the end of a socialistic article in one

of the magazines. The editor is an old friend of mine. I went to him and explained. 'Get me the boy's address,' said I, 'and mind you pay him well for the article, you old skinflint!' I expect to hear from him at any time within the present twenty-four hours."

During the pause that followed this speech the door opened, and Sampson announced:

"Miss Primrose, to see Miss Geraldine."

At the same moment the clock on the mantelpiece struck three.

"Good gracious!" cried Mrs. Selwin, "and I promised to be at Osgood Flattery's studio at three o'clock! You will go with me, Colonel? I want your opinion about my portrait, and we can have our talk out in the carriage driving up town. . . . Geraldine will be down in a minute, my dear. I suppose you have come to discuss the ball to-night. I mean it to be very gay, you know—lots of favors! You're coming, of course, Colonel, and you must bring your black sheep—if you find him. We might introduce our two young people to each other and to society to-night. You'll excuse me, my dear? This is a very busy afternoon with me. I hope your mother is well . . ."

And with a sidelong handshake to Miss Primrose, Mrs. Selwin, who had caught up her bonnet and mantle from a chair and hastily adjusted them before the mirror while she was talking, abruptly departed, sweeping Colonel Herford in her train.

Little Miss Primrose, left alone, wandered gently and aimlessly about the room while she waited for her friend.

She was a small pink-and-white, blond creature, with shortsighted eyes and a tiny, sensitive nose that seemed to quiver at the end like a rabbit's whenever anything agitated her. She was always being agitated by Geraldine, whose society had an awful fascination for her, producing on her timid nerves the effect of a galvanic battery which gave her a shock whenever she touched it, but

which she could not help touching whenever she had an opportunity.

As she stood peering into the features of a photograph she had taken from the mantelpiece she was, as usual, startled to hear Miss Selwin's voice suddenly addressing her from the doorway, and turned to behold that young lady's slim figure standing dramatically on the threshold.

Although it drew near the ceremonious hour of the social world's day, Geraldine was arrayed in a short skirt and a plain, tightly fitting Eton jacket, with a small felt hat, of the shape affected by the Spanish bull-fighters, perched on one side of her head. She was admirably equipped either for bicycling or for rainy weather, but for an afternoon in the house her costume appeared a little unconventional.

"Are Grandmamma and Colonel Herford safely off?" she asked. "I should like to have seen the dear old gentleman, but I've been lunching up stairs with Mademoiselle, because I'm rather in disgrace. Look out, Polly! There's an awful secret hidden behind that photograph."

Miss Primrose promptly dropped the frame with a crash, uttering a little cry of alarm.

"Oh, I hope I've done no harm!" she exclaimed.

"You hadn't till I spoke," answered Geraldine, her great dark eyes lighting up and her mouth curving in mischievous amusement. "And I don't think you have done more than break the glass since then, and that doesn't matter. How are you, Polly? I haven't seen you for two days at least, and I have got such things to tell you!"

"About the ball to-night?" suggested Polly.

"Ball! Who cares about the ball? The house is all upset and everybody as cross as cats on account of it. No, indeed, it's something much more interesting. Here, let us pick up the pieces, and I'll explain what I meant by 'a secret.' It's just—an address."

She gathered up the bits of glass as she spoke, threw them into the

waste-paper basket, and picking up the gilt frame, drew a folded paper from behind the picture.

"I hid this yesterday afternoon when I came in," she said. "Granny came down and almost caught me reading it, so I stuck it in there, and I haven't had a chance to get it out since. Oh, Polly, such an adventure! I hardly know where to begin to tell you about it."

She motioned Miss Primrose into a large upholstered chair and seated herself on an arm of it. Then she looked up at the ceiling for inspiration.

Miss Primrose's tortoiseshell eyeglass traveled up and down her friend's lazy length.

"Where have you been?" she inquired. "Or where are you going in that costume, Geraldine?"

"When you hear where I've been your hair will begin curling all of itself," returned Geraldine. "And when you hear where I'm *going* you'll stiffen out in a fit directly. That's half the fun of telling you things. You are so easy to shock." She flung a protecting and affectionate arm round Polly's shoulder. "Well," she began, "yesterday afternoon, you must know, Mademoiselle had a providential headache."

"What kind of a headache?" inquired Polly, who was rather dull.

"Oh, the kind governesses have when they are too ill to look after you but not ill enough for you to look after them. Don't interrupt, Polly, or I sha'n't have time to tell you my adventure. Well, Mademoiselle had that kind of a headache, and I wasn't sorry, because, you see, I wanted to go off on a secret errand of my own. Do you remember that nice elderly maid Grandmamma had so long—longer than she ever had any maid? Mary Minch, her name was, and she nursed me when I had pneumonia, two years ago. Oh, nonsense, you must remember her, so look intelligent! However, it doesn't matter. The point is that after being with us so long, when we were abroad and all, Grandmamma scolded her most violently and unjustly the day

we landed—the day she lost her jewel box, you know—and she left at once, and a great shame I thought it. I felt it was all my fault, anyhow, for having called her out of the cabin to help me; so I told her if ever I could do anything for her to let me know, and yesterday morning I had a letter from her saying she was ill and in trouble, and wanted to see me. She lives in such a funny place, No. 29 Great Jones street."

"But I don't know where that is," said Polly, aghast.

"No more do I," returned Geraldine, "for, as it happened, I never got there. I shall have to go another time, I suppose, though it won't be easy to manage; I tried to go yesterday, as I told you, and I got as far as the Bowery, and that's where I met with my adventure."

"The Bowery!" cried Miss Primrose, "why, I know about that. My brother always says places are 'too far from the Bowery.' And you've actually been there! Isn't it dreadful?"

"Just a wide street full of cheap shops and museums, as far as I could see, with the elevated road and half a dozen car tracks running down the middle of it. I asked a policeman, and he said Great Jones street was off the Bowery, so I thought I'd walk down and see what it was like. I had started early, but still it was after four, and quite dark and drizzly when I got there, but I wasn't going to turn back."

"You are so brave!" said Polly, admiringly.

"Well, I can always do the things I'm afraid to do," remarked Geraldine, reflectively, "if you call that brave. I really didn't like doing this much, and it began to rain, and of course I had no umbrella, but I walked along with my head in the air—"

"Didn't you spoil your hat?" asked Miss Primrose, who took a very feminine interest in clothes.

"Hat! Pshaw! who cares about hats! But I had on these things, if you want to know, and they are

built for rain. Now comes the interesting part, so listen. I was walking along with my head in the air and a small bandbox on my arm—a bonnet I had bought on my way down as a present for Mary—a beauty, too, with a rose as big as a cabbage—when suddenly a great, rough negro knocked against me so hard that I staggered and fell on my knees; he snatched my purse out of my hand and made off with it. I screamed, and a young man who was hurrying past stopped and picked me up; then he picked up the bonnet, which had flown out of the bandbox, and then he began to brush the mud off my skirt, saying: 'Not much harm done, I fancy.' 'I don't know what you call harm,' I said; 'the man knocked me down and ran away with my purse.' 'Oh, I didn't see that,' he said, 'I thought he only knocked against you. Why didn't you say "Stop thief?" It's too late to catch him now. Was there much in it?' 'Only my car-fare,' said I—which was true, for I had pinned the money I meant to give Mary inside the bonnet—and I never thought of saying "Stop thief." I'm not accustomed to the ways of this street.' He laughed and asked me where I lived, and I said in Harlem; and where I was going, and I said just to carry a bonnet to a 'lady' in Great Jones street. For I did not want to tell him the truth, though I knew by his voice and manner that he was a gentleman. 'Well,' he said, 'I'm going to No. 29 in that street myself. There's been some sort of row there, and I've been sent to write it up. I'm a reporter. I'll take you where you want to go, but another time you tell your employers to send a boy with their old bonnets.'"

"Oh, Geraldine," gasped Polly, "he took you for a milliner's girl! How awfully, awfully interesting! Just like a book!"

"When I found he was a reporter and that he was going to the very same house I was in search of, and that there was a row there," continued Miss Selwin, "I didn't know what to do. I just stopped short. 'What's

the matter?" said he. "I don't think I'd better go on," said I, "if there's any trouble there." "That's a sensible girl," said he. "You'd much better go home now and come again in the morning, when everything's quieted down." "But the bonnet," I said. "Couldn't you—wouldn't you take it for me?" For I wanted Mary to get the money. "Oh, please do, *please* do, or I shall get so scolded!" I saw he didn't like the idea, so I threw that in. "The name is Minch, and it's the second floor." "Oh, very well," he said, rather crossly, taking the box and looking awfully puzzled. "I dare say I'm a fool, but I'll take it. Good-night." "But I can't get home without any money," said I. "Would you mind lending me five cents, and please give me your name and address, so that I may return it to you?" He laughed and said something about that being hardly necessary, but I insisted, so he wrote it for me, thrust it and the money into my hand, muttered that he was in an awful hurry and rushed away. And it *was* necessary, for what do you think that misguided young man had given me in mistake for five cents? A five-dollar gold piece!" She held it up as she spoke. "Isn't it too dreadful?"

Polly sat breathless for a moment.

"And what did you do?" she finally ejaculated.

"Oh, I walked home," said Geraldine, ruefully; "and I was so tired! But I couldn't get into a car with that, could I? And what do you suppose I am going to do to-day? I am going to the address he gave me, to return it to him, and what's more, I'm going directly, and what's more, you are going to sit in my room and keep Mademoiselle at bay till I get back."

Miss Primrose fell back limply in her chair.

"Now don't be a little goose," said Miss Selwin, setting her upright again, much as if she were a doll. "This is the only opportunity I shall have, and I must take advantage of it. Mademoiselle is awfully busy with fa-

vors and things for to-night; Granny is out for the whole afternoon, and will probably not come home till it's time to dress for dinner—she is going to dine out, too, so she'll be in an awful hurry, and not think of asking me questions. You see, it's the best time, isn't it? And you'll stay?"

But Miss Primrose only groaned.

"Don't make me," she implored. The idea of refusing outright never occurred to her.

"But I can't help it, Polly. I don't want Mademoiselle to know that I'm going out now, and later I don't want Granny to know that I've been out. If you just sit in my room and talk a little to yourself every now and then, nobody will suspect that I'm not with you. Please be nice about it, just this once! I'd do the same for you, if you got into a scrape. I won't be long. There's a dear! You wouldn't have me *keep* the young man's money, would you? Of course I don't know just what reporters make, but I dare say five dollars goes a long way with them. I've *got* to return it, and there's nobody I can trust to take it but myself."

"I'd a great deal rather not," moaned Miss Primrose.

"Everyone has to do things they'd rather not do," said Miss Selwin, philosophically, "and the sooner you begin, Polly, the sooner you'll get used to it. That's life! You don't suppose I quite entirely like going off on this expedition, do you?"

"I really believe you do, Geraldine," murmured the victim, faintly, shaking her distracted head as she observed her friend's brilliant color and mischievous, excited eyes.

"Well, then, so much the better for me, since it must be done. It's more amusing than paying visits with Grandmamma or walking up Madison avenue and down Fifth with Mademoiselle. Good-bye, my dear, I'm off. Wish me good luck, and mind you don't leave till I come back." She stood up and began to button her coat as she spoke.

"Oh, please don't go; please don't leave me!" wailed Polly, clinging to

her. "I don't like it. I sha'n't know what to do if anything happens."

"Well, if I'm not back by six, you might go home and write a note saying that I was dining with you——"

"Oh, Geraldine!"

"And if I'm not at your house by eight, you may suppose that I have eloped with Mr. Charles Ford, of Stuyvesant Square, and I sha'n't be at the ball to-night."

She waved a mocking farewell, and the door shut behind her.

II

CHARLES FORD was sitting in his room at No. 6 Stuyvesant Square, smoking a pipe and talking to two other young men who like himself were following the profession of journalism. One of these, a short, thick-set, rosy boy with a turned-up nose and twinkling eyes of never failing merriment sat on the table, swinging his legs. The other, tall, pale and rather black about the eyes, occupied the one and only armchair. Charles himself, with his hands in his pockets and his chair tilted back against the wall, surveyed the two dreamily through his half-shut gray eyes, and contributed his share to the conversation through the firmly clenched teeth that supported his pipe. He was a strong, broad-shouldered fellow enough, with a short, straight nose and a clean-shaven, square jaw; the sort of young man whom one involuntarily pictures swinging down a country lane with a dog at his heels, rather than hunting Fortune through side-alleys with a reporter's pencil.

"You made a pretty good thing out of that Great Jones street row yesterday, Ford," said the tall young man, whose name was Burke, and who was familiarly known as "the Ghost," on account of his unusual height and extreme paleness.

"Glad you liked it," muttered Charles. "They cut it down, though. It was worth a column at least."

"Outside column of the first page, I suppose, best place in the paper,"

remarked Jimmy Playfair, from the table, "and none too good for you, of course. You are so modest."

"I don't know what you call a first page story, if that wasn't one," said Charles, coolly. "It was just Bell's bad judgment."

"That's it—Bell's bad judgment," jeered the Ghost. "But don't be too hard on him. You've only been on the paper a week——"

"Eleven days," interrupted Charles.

"Eleven days," resumed the Ghost, "and he is slow. He hasn't yet taken in the fact that you are the best man in Park Row. Give him three days more and he'll find out that New York gets up earlier just to read your stuff."

"You may say what you like, my good Ghost," exclaimed the derided one, with some warmth, "but I've been at work long enough to know that it was a first-rate human interest story as I wrote it. And there was mystery in it, too. Here was a respectable middle-aged couple living in decency and comfort, fond of each other, so the people of the house told me. He comes home early in the afternoon, cheerful and perfectly sober, and the next thing the neighbors know she is screaming 'Murder!' at the top of her lungs. They call the police, ring for an ambulance, send in a fire alarm by mistake, break in, and find her half-choked and all bruised, senseless on the floor, the furniture flung about as if there had been a cyclone, and the man gone. When she comes to, the first thing she wants to know is if *he's* safe. Not safe in the station-house, mind you, but safely out of trouble. Now I ask you——?"

"Marvelous," cried Burke. "Just think, Jimmy, a tenement-house row such as doesn't happen oftener than twenty thousand times every week day and thirty thousand every Sunday; and he only writes a column and a half about it. Why, it was worth a page!"

Charles colored. "Well," he said, "perhaps I was led astray by my interest in what I saw and didn't write."

"Oh, you didn't write it all?" said Jimmy. "What did you leave out—the point?"

"Exactly what I did, and did it deliberately."

"Tell us," cried Master Playfair, deeply sarcastic, and wriggling on the table with pretended excitement; "tell your humble friends."

"Your mental attitude doesn't invite confidence, Jimmy; I address myself to the Ghost, whose irony is less blatant. The extraordinary part of the story is that after I had talked to the woman for a little while she suddenly asked me to clear the room of all the sympathizing friends who were standing about in groups, gaping, and when we were alone she seemed disposed to confide the whole of her troubles to me. She said that after this she was afraid she must leave her husband, who had got into bad company and was spending too much money. He had nearly done for her that day because she wouldn't let him leave the house with something he wanted to pawn and she wished to keep. She wasn't going to stay to be abused, but she couldn't bear to go without giving him a chance. It was the first time he had ever struck her, etc., etc.—"

"And she wanted to wait for a second, poor fool."

"I suppose so, but she didn't want to give him another chance at the family plate, which was done up in a neat parcel ready for transportation, so she asked me if I wouldn't take it and keep it until she could come for it in the morning."

"Triple ass—" began Burke, but Charles held up one hand.

"Stop a minute. I declined the honor at first, and advised her to get in one of the neighbors to stay with her, if she were afraid. She seemed unwilling, but said she would think over my advice. As I left the room I stepped on this, lying just outside the sill." He took something out of his pocket and held it up as he spoke. It was the broken spike of a diamond star. Burke took it from him and examined it curiously. Jimmy Playfair whistled shrilly.

"Now," observed Charles, anticipating friendly inquiry, "the questions are: What should I have done? what would *you* have done? and what was inside that parcel I was asked to take care of?"

"I know what you did," said the Ghost, who prided himself on his detective abilities. "You took it home, like the good-natured idiot you are. And I guess what was in it. I'll write my idea on a slip of paper if you like. I believe you're in luck. Events will show. Of course I may be mistaken, but I would wager a modest sum that you are going to make your mark—or a prodigious fool of yourself and me, Ford, before you are many days older. It all depends on what you do now."

"To my mind," said Playfair, solemnly, "the question is, what did you do then?"

"And that's just what I don't mean to tell you yet. Moreover, that is not all the story."

"More mysteries," murmured the Ghost, elevating his eyebrows.

"On my way down there," continued Charles, "I saw a girl, good-looking, extraordinary good walk and look about the back hair and heels. She was just ahead of me, with a bandbox on her arm. Suddenly a man ran out of a house, bolted down the steps, knocked into her and kept on. She slipped and fell, and I picked her up and brushed her off. She was terribly confused and nervous. 'He took my purse,' she said, helplessly, looking in the direction in which he had run. She appeared to be a milliner's girl, as nearly as I could gather, and the queerest part of it was that she was on her way to the very house I was bound for. She had the nicest eyes!" reflectively.

"And did she touch you for carefare?" asked Jimmy, solicitously.

"Worse than that. When she found that we were going to the same place she handed me the box and said if I wouldn't mind taking it for her she thought she'd better go home."

"I call that cool," said Burke.

"I call it confiding," said Jimmy.

"How did she know that you wouldn't make off with her bandbox, just as the other fellow had made off with her purse?"

"I call it good judgment of character," retorted Charles. "She knew from the look of me that I'd take it all right if I said I would."

"And did you?" inquired the Ghost, with languid interest.

"I took it, yes, but either she did not give me the right name or I mistook what she said; at any rate, no Mrs. Minch could be found in the house; and yet, 'Minch, second floor,' were the words I thought I could have sworn to. They told me that there had never been any Minch there, and the second floor was occupied by Mrs. Strong—the woman of my row."

"It strikes me," remarked Playfair, "that the young woman was making a fool of you. What do you think?"

"Not half such a fool as I made of myself," said Charles, exploding into sudden laughter. "When I gave her car-fare—for your penetration has not erred, Jimmy; she did ask me for car-fare, and made me give her my name and address, too, so that she might return it—in my excitement I made a mistake and presented her with a five-dollar gold piece instead of five cents!"

"And I suppose she fairly ran as soon as your back was turned. Really, Charles, you mustn't go about the streets alone. And she took your name and address, did she? You'd better leave a description of her with the people down stairs and a warning."

"Oh, her story was all right, and she, too, but much too pretty and scatterbrained for her business. I'd almost give five dollars to know she had got home safely."

"Lots of charming girls are milliners, now," remarked Jimmy, kissing his hand rapturously to the air at large. "I know several. And that reminds me, what did you do with the bandbox?"

"I brought it home," answered Charles. "There it is in the corner."

"What was in it?" asked Burke, who was still reflectively turning over the broken piece of jewelry he had taken from the younger man.

"A hat, I suppose. It had that appearance."

"Heaven have mercy on us! I will investigate at once," cried Playfair, bounding off the table. "It may be an infernal machine."

Charles was about to protest, but apparently thought better of it and watched the boy with some interest as he proceeded to untie the strings and lift off the lid of the box.

A black velvet bonnet, surmounted by an enormous pink rose, appeared in a minute at the end of his outstretched arm.

"No deception here, gentlemen; a genuine article and no mistake. How do you think it becomes me?"

He clapped it on his head as he spoke, only to snatch it off again and peer anxiously into the crown. After a little fumbling he produced a five-dollar bill and the very large pin with which Geraldine had secured it.

"You seem to be quits as far as money is concerned," he exclaimed, holding up the bill. "This is rather curious, Burke, don't you think, taken in connection with the rest of the adventure?"

He stood still in the middle of the room, holding the bonnet in his hand.

"What is your theory, Ford?" asked Burke, looking up.

"I think the story will be worth a page when it's written," returned Charles, with elaborate indifference.

At this moment there came a timid knock, and all three started as if their detection in crime were imminent.

Jimmy, who was nearest the door, looked pleadingly at the Ghost, who looked at Charles, who said nothing.

The knock was repeated, and this time Charles looked at the Ghost, who looked at Jimmy, who said, "Come in," with the sudden roar of the awakened sleeper.

The handle turned and a slim figure appeared from the darkness of the hall—a girl's figure, in a short

skirt and tightly fitting little jacket, with a toreador hat perched on one side of her head. She glanced quickly from one to the other—a brave reconnoitre, through a pair of frightened eyes.

"Are these Mr. Ford's rooms?" she inquired, from the doorway, very bold as to bearing and manner and very timid as to voice.

"They are," answered Charles, rising with some difficulty from his tipped-back chair and putting down his pipe. "Is there anything I can—?" He stopped short as he recognized her.

The Ghost slowly erected himself in sections, and Jimmy Playfair slipped the bonnet behind his back. They all looked at her curiously, and Geraldine's desire to turn and run away almost expressed itself in sudden action.

"I took—I mean you gave—that is, when you were so kind as to help me yesterday, you remember, you lent me five cents that was—I mean, that *wasn't* really five cents at all. You gave me this gold piece by mistake, and I've brought it back."

"I realized last night what I must have done with it," said Charles, smiling, "but I have not had time to miss it."

"I came as soon as I could," she observed, advancing into the room with outstretched hand. "Five dollars is a good deal of money to a young man, isn't it? I know it is to a milliner's assistant," she added, fearing she had been rude, and hastily adopting the character she had before assumed.

Her audience laughed. "It is indeed," they said as one man.

Geraldine advanced another step. She put the money on the table and pushed it toward its rightful owner, who mechanically picked it up.

"I had to walk home, after all," she said, with a shy little smile at Charles. "I was beggared with riches."

"All the way to Harlem? I am so sorry!"

"I don't live quite in Harlem," she admitted, with some embarrassment;

"our house is—is just a little this side, you know."

"Still it was a long walk for you, and I am sorry to have been of so little assistance—" began Charles, observing her narrowly.

"But you were very kind; it was just an accident—and besides, you did assist me. You took my handbox for me," she broke in, cordially. "I hope it wasn't much trouble."

"None at all, none at all," stammered he, casting a threatening glance at Playfair, who was wildly endeavoring to repin the money in the bonnet, which he still held behind him, while he sidled, crablike, across the floor toward the box. "I was very glad to do it, I assure you, only, unfortunately, I couldn't find Mrs. Minch—you said Minch, didn't you?"

"I believe I did," exclaimed Geraldine, in consternation, "and I forgot until this very minute that the letter told me to ask for Mrs. Strong. How stupid in me! Then you did not leave it?" She was so disturbed that the evident sensation caused by her words completely escaped her.

Charles uttered a faint ejaculation; the Ghost fixed her with a stony stare, and Playfair, who had by this time succeeded in restoring the bonnet to its box, dropped the lid with an appreciable noise.

She turned involuntarily, and Charles hastily interposed.

"Not knowing what to do, I brought it back with me, hoping I might hear from you. It is safe in the corner there—that is, if my somewhat awkward young friend has not succeeded in putting his foot in it." The glance with which he favored his awkward young friend caused that gentleman to beat a retreat, murmuring something about important business, as he reluctantly approached the door. There he stopped and looked back.

"Aren't you coming, Burke?" he inquired briskly from the threshold, having no mind to leave the Ghost to the enjoyment of a scene from which he was shut out. "You'll miss that appointment, you know."

Miss Selwin was engaged in the in-

vestigation of her property, and the pantomimic deprecation of the Ghost and insistence of Playfair were alike lost upon her.

When she looked up they were gone.

"I hope I did not drive your friends away," she said. "I must go myself directly. Now that I have returned your money I think I'd better take this to—to Mrs. Strong. I ought to have gone there yesterday, only— Do you suppose there is any trouble there to-day? What did you find was the matter? Was it much of a row?"

"You don't read the papers, then?" said Charles, with guile.

"No, not often. My grandmother doesn't approve—I mean she thinks it a waste of time—"

"When you ought to be sewing?"

"Sewing?" echoed Geraldine, forgetting her rôle.

"Bonnets," insinuated Charles, watching her with interest; "such as that beautiful creation you made for the lady in Great Jones street."

"Oh," said Miss Selwin, recovering herself quickly, "I'm not clever enough to sew like that. I just tack in the linings."

"With pins, sometimes," he suggested, banishing every trace of expression from his face.

She flushed and glanced at him sharply.

"You have been looking at my bonnet," she said, haughtily, "and I consider it extremely impertinent."

"Not when one hopes to find the name of the maker, surely."

"You couldn't have found my name," she answered, demurely, half appeased, but anticipating difficulties. "The girls aren't allowed to advertise themselves at the expense of the firm."

"I hardly hoped that. But I found the name of your—er—employers. They seem very fashionable, by the way, and I might have returned the bonnet to them if I had not been afraid, first, of getting you into trouble, and second, of defeating the object with which you pinned in your lining."

"Mrs. Strong isn't very rich," said Geraldine, twisting the buttons of her coat with uneasy fingers. "I—that is," desperately, "it was a little present from my grandmother."

"Mrs. Strong wears very handsome bonnets."

"That was a present from me. They—they sometimes give us things at the shop, you know."

"You seem very fond of her."

"Yes, she was very kind to me once. She—er—she used to live with us."

"And yet you forgot her name! A warm heart but a short memory, I'm afraid."

"Her name used to be Minch. She has married, I suppose, since she left us. I know a butler," continued Miss Selwin, confidentially, her mischievous spirit unable to resist this opportunity of puzzling him, "I know a grand butler who will feel very badly about that."

"A butler?" exclaimed Charles.

"Yes, a butler who lives in the house where my grandmother is housekeeper. It's quite a big house, you see, and I'm allowed to live with her. You mayn't believe it, but I see all the smart people whenever there is a dinner party."

"And do you never wish you could go to the dinner parties, too?"

"No," said Geraldine, with a reflective sigh, "particularly since I've been old enough to come—" she caught herself up—"to come to my own conclusions about things, you know," she ended, in some confusion.

"Really!" said Charles, highly diverted; "and what are your conclusions?"

"I don't believe the people at dinner parties enjoy themselves very much, do you? I'd rather go—" here she cast about in her mind for the kind of entertainment a milliner's assistant might be supposed to enjoy—"to a picnic in the country, with dancing—on a platform—by moonlight. But I really don't know," she went on, hastily, as she smoothed the tissue paper and tied the cover on the box, "why I stand here talking, when

it's getting later every minute, and I ought to be on my way to Great Jones street."

As she spoke the last words the door opened cautiously, and the Ghost put his head in.

"I beg your pardon, Ford," he began, "I thought I'd left——"

"So did I, my dear fellow," returned Charles, sarcastically, "but it seems you hadn't."

"—some papers on the table," concluded Burke, calmly, looking across the room. "Are those they, by the typewriter——?"

"If so, I hope you'll leave them a little longer. That's some stuff I'm doing for a magazine."

"Oh, I beg your pardon. Good-bye," said the Ghost, withdrawing.

"Good-bye," said Charles, shutting the door with emphasis.

"I must say good-bye, too, and thank you," said Miss Selwin, with her box on her arm. "I really must go to Mrs. Strong. It's all right for me to go to-day, don't you think so?"

"Not alone," replied the young man, shaking his head solemnly.

"Why? What could happen to me? Is it an awful place, a place where you catch diseases or lose your pocketbook, as I did mine yesterday? I wonder why Mary, I mean Mrs. Strong, lives there, if it's such a bad neighborhood."

"Oh, it's respectable enough, as such places go. But there may be rough people about. If you will allow me, I will see you and the bandbox there in safety."

"You are very good," said Geraldine, rather stiffly, "but I will not trouble you. I can manage perfectly this time, I'm sure."

"It was quite a bad row they had yesterday," observed the young man, indifferently; "a woman nearly murdered by her own husband, and—" He broke off and caught the box as it slipped from her arm.

"Good gracious!" cried Miss Selwin, aghast; "perhaps if you would be so kind, I had better—if it would not be taking too much of your time. I think I *am* rather frightened to go

alone. I suppose, perhaps, I oughtn't to go at all, but I do particularly want to see her. And I shall be quite safe with you, sha'n't I?"

"You may trust me," he answered, "to take the best possible care of you. Excuse me one minute while I get my coat, and we will start at once."

He disappeared into an inner room, the door of which Geraldine now noticed for the first time. She saw with some amusement that he had carried the bandbox with him, and wondered if he considered it in the light of a hostage.

"I don't mean to go without it this time, certainly," she said to herself as she wandered idly about, glancing at the pictures and the furniture. "This is not such a bad room, and I dare say the life is interesting. He seems to be rather nice. I wonder what he thinks of me. I wonder what his people are like. I wonder whether it would be very dishonorable to look at the title of his article, so that I shall know it when it comes out."

She bent over the typewriter, from the top of which the first page protruded temptingly.

"The Unemployed as Mischief-makers," she read aloud.

"If you please, Mr. Ford," cried a voice behind her, "there's an old gentleman followin' me up stairs as told me to tell you his name was Colonel Herford, and he says you'll see him whether you're in or out, because he's your father." Thus the maid-of-all-work, breathless and agitated, from the doorway.

"What's that you say?" exclaimed Charles, in surprise, rushing out of his room, his hat and coat in one hand and the box in the other.

Geraldine, with a gasp, sat down in the nearest chair, which happened to be in front of the typewriter. She bent her head and turned her shoulder to the door, wondering how she should escape, not so much present as future recognition on the part of the Colonel, when they should meet later at her grandmother's house.

So this was Colonel Herford's son—

the boy who had rather scorned her little girlish advances when they were children, and whom she remembered to have admired and envied greatly when he went off to school. She was left at home with a governess, who screamed when she saw a snake, and would not entertain the idea of mice as pets—mice that Master Herford had with some solemnity entrusted to Geraldine, and whose secreted existence caused her much anxiety until, in due course of time, she herself was sent to school in the Isle of Wight, and they had died a natural death, entirely unlamented by their original owner.

She stole a glance at this strange Charles Herford whom she did not know, and found him stealing a glance at her. They both looked away as the noise of steps on the stair gave place to the hearty tones of the Colonel's voice, exclaiming:

"Well, you ungrateful young rascal! What do you mean by this? I've a devilish good mind to disinherit you, I can tell you."

"That's all right, sir," said Charles; "you have disinherited me two or three times a year ever since I can remember, and once out of every three times I've deserved it, no doubt. How are you? I'm so glad to see you looking so well. It is very evident that anxiety for me hasn't preyed on you, you dear old Spartan!" Having dropped his hat and coat, he threw his arm affectionately round his father's shoulders and walked down the room with him. "Well, I suppose you think me quite mad. Never mind. How did you find me out?"

"Why," began the Colonel, "I saw your initials—Who's that young lady, Charles? Deuced fine-looking girl, 'hem! Your typewriter, eh?"

"And stenographer," added Charles, with dignity. "Miss Jones." The Colonel bowed, and Geraldine's head inclined still lower. "Miss Jones is one of the marvels of the age. She can take down—how many words can you take down a minute, Miss Jones?"

Miss Selwin murmured something unintelligible.

"Two hundred words a minute," he interpreted, turning to his father; "and as for typewriting——"

"If you don't need me any more to-day, Mr.—er—Herford," she broke in, rising, "I think I may as well go now."

"You couldn't just run through the first pages of that article?" said Charles, persuasively; "it would give me a better idea of where I am, you know, and in a few minutes—I dare say—we—er—might reach the point where we should be able to carry out our original plan. Don't let us disturb you. My father and I will move over here."

Not knowing what to do for the minute, Geraldine sank back in her seat and, half-amused, half-indignant, watched him as he established the Colonel in the armchair and drew up another for himself, gently setting down the bandbox, which he had never relinquished, beside him.

He and his father were soon absorbed in the discussion of personal affairs, and she became so interested in the arguments the young man advanced to defend his position, and the explosions of the Colonel's adjective artillery in return, that she quite forgot her new part, and was considerably startled when, suddenly breaking off in the middle of a sentence, the Colonel remarked that he feared so violent a discussion incommoded Miss Jones, whose typewriter he observed was quite silenced.

Geraldine stammered a hasty denial, while her fingers struck all the keys they could reach at once, producing astounding results.

Charles jumped up and came over to her, saying politely that he believed the machine was out of order. Here was an opportunity.

"I'm afraid it is," she said, "very much out of order. I certainly can't write on it to-day. I shall only spoil your copy."

"Let me see," he exclaimed, bending over her to examine the instrument. "No, no, that's all right. It had only stuck," and naming the letters as he touched them, he spelled

out "Stay a few minutes more, I beg of you," and he accompanied the words with as pleading a look as he could manage, to which Miss Selwin, not being able to write, replied, in a furious whisper: "I can't. Give me my bonnet-box."

Charles pretended not to hear. "Give it another trial," he said, cheerfully, returning to the Colonel. "I think you'll find it works now."

"Not for me!" returned Geraldine, firmly, pushing back her chair. "I am quite sure I can do nothing with it, and as it is getting rather late, I think, if you please, I'll go home."

"Certainly, Miss Jones; don't let me detain you." He got up at once, carelessly pushing his chair over the box as he did so.

She stood hesitating by the table, unwilling to go without it, and not quite knowing how to insist on its surrender. It seemed so *intimate*, somehow, to demand a bandbox, an aggressively feminine bandbox, from a gentleman who is deliberately concealing it under his chair and appears determined not to give it up without a struggle.

Charles smiled provokingly and said a few words to his father while he watched her linger over the straightening of her hat and the putting on of her gloves.

She had just made up her mind to ask boldly for her property, no matter what explanations it might entail, when a more subtle expedient suggested itself. Fair exchange is no robbery.

"I will take these papers of yours home with me, Mr. Herford, if you like," she said, demurely. "I can then copy them at my leisure, and you may whistle—I mean send for them when you want them." She gathered up the manuscript as she spoke, bowed to the Colonel and took a few steps toward the door.

"You are very kind!" exclaimed Charles, his eyes gleaming with suppressed amusement, "but they are not in any condition to take yet. I haven't finished correcting them."

"It's not necessary, really," she answered. "I can do that for you. I read you—your handwriting, I mean—like print."

"An invaluable woman!" cried the Colonel, admiringly.

"Thank you, Colonel Herford," said the invaluable woman, smiling mischievously. "Good afternoon."

"One moment, Miss Jones," said Charles; "you have not left me your address—to send for the papers, you know. Shall I do them up for you?" holding out his hand.

"No, thank you, I can take them as they are. And you surely know my address. Why, you'll be pretending to forget my name next."

"Just write it for me again," he insisted. "I've such a bad memory for addresses, and yours is particularly elusive."

For an instant Geraldine saw herself in a quandary, but only for an instant. The next she had slipped round the other side of the table, brushed aside Charles's chair, which from his last move had left unguarded, and annexed the bandbox.

"Anything to oblige you, I'm sure," she said, triumphantly, as she approached him. "Here's my address," scribbling rapidly on a piece of paper, which she folded and handed to him, "and perhaps you would send the manuscript to me, after all; it will give you time to correct any mistaken impressions, and I have, as you see, a great deal to carry. Good afternoon, Mr. Herford."

"You're not going straight home, then, Miss Jones?" he said, with apparent carelessness, following her to the door.

"Ah, that I can't say," she returned, merrily; "no one can tell what will happen when once the 'Blue bonnets come over the border.'"

"That's an unusually good-looking young woman," said Colonel Herford, as the door shut on her. "She reminds me of someone, but I can't think who. A trifle over-assured in manner, perhaps; but that's owing

to her independent position, I suppose. You find her satisfactory, on the whole?"

"Well, hardly that," said Charles, highly exasperated by his defeat and chafing at his enforced inaction. "But I dare say she's better than most of them."

"You said just now she was so quick—" began the bewildered Colonel.

"Oh, she's quick enough," replied his son; "it's not that. Well, sir, I mustn't keep you here with me. I suppose you are full of business, as usual."

But the Colonel protested that he had the rest of the afternoon to bestow on his son, at whose escapade he now allowed it to appear he was more pleased than offended. He rallied him on the probable smallness of his income, complimented him on his work, patted his shoulder and suggested that he might be received back into paternal grace and the fold of respectability as soon as he had had his fling and was prepared to return; to which Charles replied that his word was his word, and he wasn't going back till he had made it good and earned his money.

With great self-control and an unusual display of tact the Colonel waived the point, only insisting that his son should give up the evening to him, and making a solemn engagement that they should dine together and go on later to Mrs. Selwin's ball, where, the old gentleman hinted with many sly glances, there were very special reasons for their presence.

Charles listened and acquiesced vaguely, outwardly all respectful attention, while his mind was busy with conjectures as to the probable whereabouts of Miss Jones.

"Very well, sir," he said, "we'll go, and if I approve your choice you shall have my filial blessing without more ado."

"Damn it all, sir!" exclaimed the Colonel, growing very red, "I don't know what you mean. The young lady I particularly wish *you* to meet, sir, Miss Selwin, the granddaughter of my old friend, is—is——"

"Oh, it's my turn first," said his son, laughing. "Well, if my taste is to be consulted, I say 'No' at once. No Miss Selwin for me. I've just seen what I take to be my ideal. *She's* the granddaughter of a housekeeper, and I'm not sure that she isn't the innocent accomplice of thieves, but all the same, I feel strangely drawn to her, and——"

"What nonsense are you talking?" cried his father, impatiently.

"The oldest nonsense in the world, I suppose," said Charles, sentimentally.

The arrival of Jimmy Playfair at this moment, in pursuit of the Ghost, who had eluded him, was most welcome. He was greeted with a heartiness he had little expected, and introduced to Colonel Herford with an enthusiasm that entitled him to consider himself from that time forward as Charles's best friend. He immediately sat down and made himself amusing with such good will that the room presently resounded with the mutual merriment of himself and the Colonel, and Charles had ample opportunity to withdraw to the window, where he unfolded the paper his mischievous lady had left him. He hardly expected to find her address; there had been a mocking assurance in her manner during the last part of her stay, a change of some sort, which had somewhat disconcerted him, but still less did he expect the remarkable sentence that met his eyes:

"I am going to take tea with Mrs. Strong," he read; "will you come, too? P. S.—I shall walk very slowly."

"Will I come, too? I should think so!" cried Charles. "I say, Jimmy, look after my father, will you? Show him the shop, and anything you think will amuse him. I'm off on an assignment. Nearly forgot it. Most important. Join you at dinner, sir, unless I'm detained. Anyhow, I'll see you at the ball. I won't fail. Good-bye."

And having caught up his hat and coat he was half-way down the hall

before the other two could draw breath to express their astonishment.

"Are people in your profession subject to these sudden exigencies?" inquired the Colonel, gazing after his son.

"There is nothing so sudden that we may not be subject to it. Let us go and look about the town a bit, sir," returned Jimmy, evasively.

And they went out together.

III

No. 29 Great Jones street had evidently been a great house in its day, and still preserved its wide front of red-brick respectability and white-stone trimmings unaltered among the changes and chances which New York streets are heir to, and which its degenerate neighbors had not escaped. Over the door it had a fan-light divided by delicate beaded spokes, and the railing of its steps had been much admired by connoisseurs in old-fashioned ironmongery.

Next to it, but separated from it by a narrow alley-way, was a great gray building used as a dancing hall, lecture-room and meeting place, and the noise of music, oratory or quarreling was sometimes the reverse of soothing to the ears of the more decent occupants of No. 29 on a hot Summer night. The alley-way was, however, an advantage, for it enabled the apartments on that side of the house to have a window, each, in their middle rooms. To be sure, these looked out on the blank wall of Ambler Hall, not four feet away, but it was felt to be an advantage, and so the owner of the house considered it, for the apartments with what, for want of a better name, was called "light" in their middle rooms rented for higher prices than those on the blind side of the house.

Mrs. Strong, once Mary Minch, and her husband occupied the second-floor apartment on the light side, and very tasteful they had made it, according to their ideas. White Nottingham lace curtains on black walnut poles

swung airily before the windows; a black walnut marble-topped table, covered with a rich yellow plush cloth, occupied the middle of the front room, standing on a white carpet that had a pattern of violently red daisies careering in festoons across it. An elegant piece of furniture, referred to by the man who sold it as an "etagee," faced the draped mantelpiece. Mrs. Strong called it a "dresser," and used it as such; and the chairs belonged to what is technically known as a "parlor suit," all but one high-backed rocking-chair, which had been left by the last tenant. The front room served as a withdrawing and dining-room, the middle room as a sleeping-room—with a folding bed to preserve the elegancies of life—and at the back was a kitchen.

Mrs. Strong was alone, desolately rocking herself to and fro, a very anxious and perplexed woman, when Geraldine burst in on her late that afternoon.

"Well, Mary," she began, "you don't know what a time I've had to get here! I should have come yesterday, only—only—well, I met with an accident and got belated, and then I heard there was some kind of a row here, and that frightened me a little. Did you hear anything of it? And now, how are you, and what can I do for you? You've married since you left us, haven't you?"

"Yes, Miss Geraldine, I'm married," returned Mary, with a sigh.

"And you don't like it? Poor dear! Isn't your husband good to you? Does he make you work hard? You've been ill, you said, and you don't look very well, I think. I'm so sorry. And I have brought you such a stupid present—a velvet bonnet. I'm afraid it won't be what you like. But you'll find a little something else with it that may be more useful. I wish I could do something for you, really—you'll tell me if I can, won't you?"

"Yes, miss," said Mary, despondently. "I did have a notion to tell you something yesterday, but I'm thinking it'll do no good to-day."

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Her face, which nature had intended to be round and rosy, looked quite pinched and drawn, her voice sounded weak and hoarse, and the hand with which she leaned on the little centre table shook perceptibly.

Geraldine was all sympathy at once. She was so strong herself, so full of life and health and high spirits, that any sign of feebleness in others, especially in so compact and self-reliant a little person as Mary, distressed her exceedingly.

"Sit down here, do," she said, pulling forward the rocking-chair, which still bore the impress of Mrs. Strong's late occupancy among its faded brown chintz cushions. "Sit down and tell me all about it—if it was a good plan yesterday I'm sure it will be a better plan to-day—and I'll give you my very best advice and assistance, indeed I will, and I am wiser than owls sometimes, you know I am, Mary."

She drew up another chair for herself and sat down, leaning forward across the table on her folded arms. "Tell me," she urged.

"You let me think it over a bit first, Miss Geraldine. You see, you came on me unexpected like, to-day, and I haven't just settled in my mind what to do. It was very kind of you to come at all, I'm sure, miss, and to bring me a present, too," touching the box on the table with nervous fingers. "Perhaps I done wrong to send to you, but it did seem—" she broke off with a sigh. "I hope Mrs. Selwin is enjoying the best of health," she added.

"Oh, yes, Grandmamma is very well. There's going to be a big ball for me at the house to-night."

"Is there, miss?" said Mary, her forehead contracting with a troubled frown. "Sampson didn't mention it to me."

"Sampson!" cried Geraldine. "Oh, I suppose he comes to see you now and then. How did he like your getting married, Mary?"

"Very much at first, miss, and not so much now, I'm thinking," said Mrs. Strong, dismally. "You see, he married me himself."

"Married you himself! Sampson!

Why, I thought—but why do you call yourself 'Strong?'"

"Well, you see he never liked the name Sampson much, Miss Geraldine, nor I don't like it myself, and he got sort of sick of it up at the house, so he says he'd as lief keep his public and his private life separate, and he's Sampson there and Mr. Strong here, and that's how it is," explained Mrs. Strong, hastily, "and I'm sure it's no harm at all."

"None whatever, I should say. But it is funny to think of your being Sampson's wife! And just now I was saying to somebody how jealous he'd be when he heard you were married. That reminds me," said Geraldine, with a somewhat guilty blush, "I—I've asked a gentleman to tea here, Mary. You'll give him some tea, won't you, and cake?—have you any cake, or some of those nice biscuit with pounded raisins in the middle of them? I like them so much. And oh, Mary, you must be *sure* not to call me by my name or say who I am, for he doesn't know the least in the world. I know who he is now—I didn't at first—Mr. Charles Herford. You must remember Colonel Herford? Well, his son. Didn't you once live with some of the family a long time ago? Yes, I thought so. But he hasn't an idea who I am. Isn't it fun! He thinks I'm a milliner's girl. It's too long a story to tell you now, but he helped me out of a scrape yesterday and nearly *into* one to-day, and I asked him to come here to tea, and he ought to be here very soon, I should think. Where's the teapot, Mary?"

"The teapot, Miss Geraldine!" echoed Mrs. Strong, with a dazed expression. "Mr. Herford! Well, that beats all! It do indeed."

"Yes; we can't have tea without a teapot, can we? And a kettle. Where do you keep the kettle? No, don't move, I'll get the things—and I'll set the table, too. You can tell me if I put anything wrong. I wonder what Sampson would think if he could come in and see me setting the table in *his* house. Wouldn't he be surprised!"

"Indeed, that's just what I'm afraid of, miss," said Mary, anxiously. "I wouldn't have Sampson find you here for a hundred dollars. Not to-day, I wouldn't."

Geraldine, on her way to the "etagee" in search of cups and saucers, stopped short in surprise.

"You see, we had words yesterday, my husband and me," Mary went on, pleating a piece of the yellow plush tablecloth between her fingers, "about something I had found out—something he did not want me to know, and he got angry and knocked me about a bit—he's never raised a hand to me before, but he was just beside himself, so he was, and didn't know what he was doing——"

"You mean to say he *struck* you?" cried Miss Selwin.

"Yes, miss," said Mary, her eyes filling with sudden tears and her voice breaking. "Yes, miss, he did, and when I cried out he just caught me by the throat and choked the breath out of me, as you might say, and I fell down on the floor, and the neighbors rushed in, and he made off with himself, and I ain't seen him since. But I know he'll come back to-day if he gets half a chance, and I don't want him to find you here. He'd never believe I hadn't told you, as I threatened——"

"Told me *what*, Mary? It is the most horrid thing I ever heard. I shall certainly speak to Sampson. This seems to be a dreadful place; there was another woman nearly murdered here yesterday, Mr. Herford told me."

"That was me, Miss Geraldine," said Mary, not without a certain dismal pride in being the heroine of horrors. "There wasn't any trouble here yesterday but ours. You see, I was a bit dazed and dizzy after my fall, and they thought I was half-killed, and had in the police and I don't know what all. That's why Mr. Herford come; to make a story for the papers. You didn't see it, miss? I got someone to buy me the paper this morning; it's here on the table if you care to look at it. I de-

clare I couldn't believe my eyes when I recognized Mr. Charles—he didn't know me at all, of course, but I remembered him very good. He wrote a great piece about me," she continued, pulling a crumpled sheet from under the bonnet-box.

But Geraldine imperiously put it aside.

"Never mind that now, Mary," she said. "I want to talk to you about this. You oughtn't to stay here. You ought to leave Sampson. It's too horrible. If I tell my grandmother she will dismiss him at once."

"Don't do that, please, miss. I've got his promise to give warning at the end of the month, and then we'll go away somewhere. There's reasons why he musn't stay, anyhow."

"You surely won't go with him, after the way he's treated you?" exclaimed the girl, passionately compassionate.

"Well, I think I'll go. A young lady like you doesn't understand these things. But it's better to stay with the man that belongs to you, even if he's not just all you thought he was, than to do for yourself alone."

"I'd rather starve than stay with a man who struck me."

"It's not that at all, miss. I could make my living without him easy enough by going back to service; but you'll see, when you have a man of your own, that when once you're accustomed to looking after him, it's hard to leave off, and that's how it is. He's done worse than strike me, if it comes to that, but I'm thinking that maybe he'll go straight from this time on, if he gets another chance."

"You are a good woman, Mary," said the girl, patting her shoulder gently.

"We're none of us much better than we have to be, that's what I often say. And now, Miss Geraldine, thanking you for your kindness, I think you'd better be going home, and I'll tell the young gentleman to go to your own house after you."

But this was a suggestion that Miss Selwin refused to entertain for an instant. She scorned the idea of

Sampson's return; he would be far too busy to leave the house that afternoon, she was sure, and if he did come, her presence and that of Mr. Herford would be a protection to Mary. Besides, it was such a joke, her being taken for a milliner's girl, she must keep it up a little longer, and Mr. Herford would be so surprised and—she couldn't help thinking—a little disappointed to find her gone; besides, Mary ought to have something to eat herself, she must be exhausted, and she had not yet looked at her new bonnet; besides, furthermore, Geraldine meant to have her own way, and there was an end of it.

"I think it is rather unkind in you, too, not to tell me what I could have done to help you yesterday that I can't do to-day," she ended, coaxingly.

"Well, you see, when I wrote to you, miss, Sampson and me hadn't had no quarrel, and I thought maybe I could manage things quietly with your help, but I changed my mind later, and then when Mr. Charles come so opportune I thought I'd leave it to him, being a man and showing himself so friendly, though he didn't know me. I don't know how it is, I always like to go to a man, though no one knows so well as me that they've less sense than women about most things. I was meaning to go round to Mr. Charles's rooms this morning, but somehow I didn't feel equal to walking that far, and I knew things was safe as they were for the present."

"And now he's coming here instead, and he won't get anything to eat if you don't hurry," interrupted Geraldine, abandoning her effort to induce Mary's confidence, and turning her attention to the condition of the larder.

A very hard, yellow, citroney cake, a loaf of brown bread and a piece of cheese were all she could find, but she declared these more than sufficient for the occasion. The cake tasted of rather bad butter, as the elaborate cakes of cheap baker-shops are very apt to do, but both the cheese and the brown bread were fresh, and

Mrs. Strong's own taste in butter was certainly above the average, to judge from the pale yellow pat she brought from the dim recesses of the kitchen. In spite of Miss Selwin's protestations Mary had insisted on filling the teapot and setting the kettle on to boil with her own hands, and it was not till this was done and the plush table-cover protected and concealed by a clean white cloth, on which three bluish china cups and three red-edged plates presented a gay appearance, that she allowed herself to try on the bonnet that Geraldine had for some time been holding in her hand.

"Do you know that's not badly becoming to me," she declared, trying to smile as she approached the distorted glass over the mantelpiece. "I am very much obliged to you, I'm sure, Miss Geraldine, only I didn't want you to be spending your money on me. It makes me feel bad, knowing what I know, and can't tell you, but thank you very much, all the same. That bonnet will last me to my dying day, you'll see." She took it off as she spoke and began to turn it round and round, inspecting its beauty from all sides. Then the five-dollar bill was discovered, and at this, much to Geraldine's astonishment, she broke down completely.

"I can't take it, miss!" she sobbed. "I can't indeed. I won't take money from you till it's all settled right and Mrs. Selwin's got her own again."

"Her own what?" cried the girl. "My poor Mary, I can't tell you how sorry I am for you, but don't—don't cry. I'm sure it will be all right. What is it you are trying to say about Grandmamma? And why can't you take the money?"

"It's Mrs. Selwin's jewels, miss, that she lost on the steamer—that Sampson stole, and married me because he thought I suspected him—which I never did, or I never would have—no, not if he'd begged till the Judgment Day—and oh, the Lord have mercy on him, for he had them hid away here, and was just beginning to break them up and pawn them one by one when I found them,

and that's why he nearly did for me yesterday! I wouldn't let them go and I threatened to tell! I meant to give them to you, miss—that's why I sent so urgent—before he knowed I knew, but he came down unexpected that afternoon, and it was all up. Oh, dear! oh, dear! But they're safe now, and Mrs. Selwin shall have them as good as ever, all but one star that's badly broke because it got stepped on. Every single other stone she'll get back, but I can't take money from you, miss, till she does. It just scalded my heart, it did, to find that pinned in the beautiful bonnet just now, and me knowing what Sampson had done."

Geraldine stood staring at her without a word.

"I was that angry when Mrs. Selwin scolded me so fierce the day the jewels was gone that I wasn't sorry to leave, but I was very lonesome afterward, and he came round me with his soft talk, saying how I mustn't take another place, but just get married to him. So I did, and all the time he thought I suspected him. He told me so yesterday. Oh, dear! As if I'd have married a man I suspected of being a thief!"

"Yet you mean to stay with him. You mean to live with him, you said, now that you *know* he is a thief, and worse than a thief—a coward who's so frightened when he's found out that he turns on you and strikes you."

"But you see he's my husband now, Miss Geraldine," pleaded Mary, "and he's no coward, you take my word for that, nor no thief by nature. If you gentlefolks would sometimes think what temptations you put in a servant's way! There's Sampson, he's accustomed to live warm in Winter and cool in Summer, and to have pretty much what he likes to eat and drink, and a couple of men under him to do all his work, and he hears money talked of all the time, as if there wasn't anything else in the world worth reaching for, and he gets to think so, too. The gentleman who's free with his money is thought

a lot of among your set, miss, and the man who's free with his money is thought a lot of in Sampson's set, and Sampson's a vain man and a generous man, and he likes to do things to make people stare. And he hasn't laid up nothing to make his old age as comfortable as his youth, and it's not to excuse him, but the idea just caught him sudden—"

"Of laying up Grandmamma's jewels for his old age? I'm afraid you don't make out a very good case for him, Mary. What are we going to do about it?"

"Oh, Miss Geraldine, don't tell. Give me this one chance for him. I told you the jewels was safe. They will be returned to Mrs. Selwin tonight, and he'll give warning the end of the month and we'll both go away and never trouble you no more. Promise you won't tell!"

"I won't," said Geraldine, with a sigh. "It's pretty hard for you, isn't it? And I believe, as you say, it's more than half our fault. Why should we have jewels when you need bread—or rather when Sampson needs comforts for his old age? Oh, well, I can't judge. I was angry for a minute, for it seemed to me we had always treated Sampson well, but for your sake, Mary, I'll hold my tongue. How are you going to return the things, and where are they now?"

Before Mrs. Strong could answer there was a knock at the door, and Charles's voice was heard demanding admittance.

"Heavens!" ejaculated Miss Selwin, hastily smoothing her hair and glancing into the glass to see whether her face were composed again, "it's Mr. Herford. I had forgotten all about him. I'll open the door, Mary; you fly to the kitchen and wash your face in cold water, or he'll think I've been abusing you also, poor dear. You can't talk to him freely till I'm gone, I suppose. I won't stay very long; it's so late. Don't forget I'm nothing but a milliner's girl, and never call me 'Miss,' or I shall break your best china. Come in," she added as the knock was repeated,

and Charles came in, looking rather flushed and exceedingly handsome.

"I am rather later than I expected to be," he said, with dignity, "but I could not open your mysterious missive at once, and just as I had done so and decided to—to follow, you know, 'where you had walked before,' I was detained——"

"So that you had to run all the way to make up for it, I should say," interrupted Miss Selwin, laughing. "You are quite out of breath."

"It's the stairs," he returned, gravely. "I'm getting old, you see."

"Then you shouldn't come up three steps at a time."

"You heard me? Then I think you might have opened the door and not left me to stumble about in that dark little hall. Especially when I had gone through such vicissitudes to get here. First I had to dispose of my father and a friend, and then just as I was leaving the house I was stopped by Burke—you know the long man who kept coming back to my rooms to-day?—and he asked me so many point-blank questions that it was hard to put him off without exciting his detective spirit. Finally I told him I was going to the—to paradise on particular business, and then he wanted to come with me. He seemed to think I should get into trouble if he wasn't at my elbow. It took an awful time to get rid of him. And then I hurried here as fast as I could. I was picturing you and Mrs. Strong sitting down to tea without me."

"Heaven preserve us!" said Geraldine, "how much a man will endure for a meal!"

"It depends a little on the company, don't you think? I don't believe I should have hurried to dine with the President as I have hurried to take tea with—Mrs. Strong."

"She's in the kitchen now, getting it ready. Shall I call her? No? well, perhaps you are right. It would be a pity to disturb her. Are you hungry? There's nothing to eat but bread and cheese."

"And—?" said Charles, kissing her hand.

"Nothing else," hastily snatching it away, "but some rather bad cake. You must not be greedy when you come out to tea with poor people."

"You know the poets, if you don't read the newspapers."

"Any public-school child would know about 'bread and cheese and kisses.' It must be in the first reader. I wonder you are not ashamed to quote anything so hackneyed. Are you glad I asked you to tea, even if there is not very much to eat?"

"Glad is a feeble expression. When I opened your note I was overjoyed."

"What did you think was going to be in it?" confidentially.

"Some jest at my expense. After the way you circumvented me about the bonnet-box, anything was possible."

"Why were you so obstinate about keeping it?"

"Because I wanted you to stay. Why were you so set on escaping with it?"

"I did not like being put in a false position; besides, I wanted to see Mrs. Strong."

"About the bonnet, of course."

"About that and other things."

"I hope it suited her."

"Admirably, thank you; it seemed to give entire satisfaction."

"Your employers would be gratified if they knew how much pleasure they had given. By the way, I don't know that I mentioned it before, but I stopped at your place this morning, and with an ingenuity it would be vanity to dwell on, I managed to find out that nobody answering your description was in the work-room—nor expected to be in the work-room that day, so I concluded——"

"I am on a holiday," replied Miss Selwin, promptly. "Don't let us talk shop. Aren't you going to sit down? You must be tired after all your morning's work."

Charles sat down opposite her at the little table. It was getting very dark outside, and though the Not-

tingham lace curtains let in all the light possible, he could hardly see more than the outline of her face distinctly. He leaned forward, looking at her frankly.

"You are not interested in hearing my conclusions?"

"Not the least in the world, but—you may tell me, if you please."

"Thank you very much. I made up my mind that you had never been employed there at all."

Geraldine went off into a little irrepressible gust of laughter. "I give you my word," she said, "that if you had mentioned my name to them they would have known me at once, and could have told you all about me if they pleased."

"But my ingenuity doesn't go far enough to invent names for people I don't know," remarked the young man, suggestively.

"And mine goes too far to supply you with the means of getting me into trouble. I might lose my place if I allowed—followers, you know."

"I might come and call on your grandmother. There could be no objection to that, could there?"

"Not if she invited you," replied Miss Selwin, demurely.

"Will you ask her? Would you be a little glad to see me?" stretching his hand across the table toward hers.

"You seem to have taken quite a fancy to me suddenly," said she, arching her brows into her hair and looking at him with the round eyes of innocence. "And a little while ago you were so suspicious."

"I can't make you out. At first I thought you were what you said you were, a milliner—then, owing to circumstances of which you may or may not be aware—circumstances that seemed to me suspicious, I made up my mind that you were—or might be—concerned in rather a big 'deal.' Now I'm hanged if I know what to think of you, only I'm sure you are not what you want me to believe—and I find I don't care. It's astonishing how little I care—but I'm on my guard, so I warn you."

"I wonder what you think I want

you to believe. I don't know how to tell you any more about myself. I do live with my grandmother, who is the housekeeper of a large house. I've been thrown more or less with gentlepeople and have learned to speak as they do. Mrs. Strong used to live with us; she has been kind to me, and it's natural enough that I should come to see her. What more is there? The very worst thing I've done for ever so long was to invite you here to tea. I thought it would be something pleasant to look back to always, but if you are going to be disagreeable I shall wish I hadn't!" The half-petulant, half-pleading look and tone were irresistible.

"Forgive me," said Charles. "I am worse than disagreeable. I am unpardonably rude. It's no business of mine what you are or what goodness of heart or moral obliquity of purpose brought you here. I only know that you are the prettiest young woman I ever saw and the most bewildering, and if you are engaged in any nefarious practices—arson, petty larceny or highway robbery—just keep them concealed from me as long as you can."

"Nefarious practices!" echoed Geraldine. "Nefarious practices! Oh! oh! oh!" and she went off into a perfect gale of delighted laughter. She began to perceive that Mary had already confided a good deal to Charles, and now it seemed that the circumstances of her own meeting with him had roused suspicions. "He thinks I am connected in some way with the robbery—that I am Sampson's accomplice, I suppose, and was going to fetch the jewels away in the bonnet-box when I was frightened off by the row here," she thought. "He has a nice opinion of my morals, though he does seem to like my personal appearance! 'The prettiest young woman he ever saw.' Well, I can take care of my conduct as long as my looks can take care of themselves, but to be suspected of stealing! and my own grandmother's jewels, too! Oh!" She laughed so heartily that Mary, who was coming

in from the kitchen with the tray, stopped short in astonishment, looking from one to the other.

"Whatever ails you, Miss Geraldine?" she was beginning, but Geraldine stopped her just in time.

"I'll take the tray, Mrs. Strong," she said. "It's too heavy for you. Here is the gentleman, my friend, Mr. Herford, very hungry and full of strange thoughts. He has just been encouraging me to take up a variety of new trades. But I don't think my grandmother would care to have me leave my present place, do you?"

"Indeed, I do not, m—my dear," returned Mrs. Strong, much flustered at the part she was obliged to play. "How do you do, sir? It's very kind of you to come to tea with us. We appreciate it, I'm sure."

"I am enjoying myself immensely," returned Charles, who had been somewhat disconcerted by Miss Selwin's sudden fit of laughter. "You are looking better, Mrs. Strong, I am glad to see, than when I was here yesterday. I rather expected you might be in Stuyvesant Square this morning if you felt well enough."

"That's what I meant to do, sir, but I didn't feel just to say well this morning. I got a good shaking up yesterday. And I knew things were safe in your hands, and I thought I'd give my mind a chance to settle. I was coming this afternoon, but Miss——"

"But I came in and told her I had invited you here," interrupted Geraldine.

They sat down at the table, Mary very ill at ease beside the two young people, her mind distracted by fears of betraying Miss Selwin's mischievous maneuvers, wishes to arrange with Mr. Herford for the safe and secret return of the jewels and absolute terror of her husband's return to this scene of merry-making. And very merry Charles and Geraldine appeared to be, though their references to traps, typewriters and the treachery of a certain Miss Jones, who had, it seemed, vanished, leaving no address and a large quantity of Mr. Herford's

work unfinished, were quite unintelligible to Mrs. Strong. She sat straining her ears for the sound of familiar footsteps, and answering mechanically when she was addressed. If only her husband had returned that morning as she had expected—it was on his account she had not dared to leave the house to go to Charles—she had faith enough in her power over him to believe that once convinced the jewels were out of his reach and his secret safe, he would make the best of circumstances and, she vowed, of himself forever after. But if he should come now—now, when it might appear that she was caught in the very act of betraying him—she anticipated the worst results.

The other two anticipated nothing. They were interested in themselves and very much amused with each other. Charles, who hated food at odd hours, found that he had eaten at least a quarter of the loaf just for the pleasure of seeing his companion's long, firm fingers cutting bread for him. Geraldine, who despised tea, drank two cups as an excuse for dawdling after the time she had set in her own mind as the very last minute up to which she could stay. "As it is, I shall get scolded for staying so long with *Polly*," she thought. "I believe I'd better go there and ask Mrs. Primrose, with Granny's compliments, if I may dine with her, it will be so late before I can get home. I hope that little goose had the wit to invent something if she was challenged." And she added aloud, standing up: "I ought to go," while the clock struck six as she spoke.

"Indeed you ought, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Strong, much relieved. "I know your grandmamma will be very much displeased at your being out so late. Please give my respects——"

"Your kind love, Mrs. Strong. That I will, and tell her that you are hoping to see her soon, either here or at the house."

Mary was so taken aback at the thought of sending her kind love to the mistress whom she had last seen

in a towering passion, that the more audacious suggestion contained in the last part of the sentence escaped her altogether.

"Well, you know what's befitting better than me," she said, helplessly.

"If there's one thing I pride myself on knowing it's what is done in society," returned Geraldine, gaily.

"The girls and I are always comparing notes to see which of us has read most novels on the subject. Novels help you a lot, don't you think so?"

"They never helped me much," said Charles, laughing.

"Perhaps you knew how to behave just of yourself, but if one doesn't know, it's astonishing how much one can learn from them."

"What do they teach you to say when a man respectfully asks you if he may see you home?" he inquired, helping her into her jacket.

"Thank you kindly, sir, but I mustn't take you out of your way."

"But if our ways are the same, as they are—identically——"

"Then we mustn't take them at the same time."

"I don't like to let you go—alone."

"I'm taking nothing valuable with me, I do assure you."

Mr. Herford looked as sentimental as the fiery expression of his gray eyes would permit. Mrs. Strong moved away with the tea things.

"I mean of intrinsic value," added Miss Selwin. "Some people attach undue importance to a mere personal trifle, but you may look in all my pockets if you like—and if you can find them——"

"Thank you, but I feel myself unequal to such an undertaking. I have seen, in my life, even one or two women try and fail. No, you may keep whatever you have in your pockets, you most astonishing young person, and I'll keep, for the present, what I have in mine."

The last words were said with a significance that could not escape Geraldine's notice. She was taken off her guard for a minute.

"You have them, then! Mary gave them to you!" she exclaimed.

"I have them, and however they came into my possession, they are not going to leave it until they are restored to their rightful owner."

"Do you know who is their rightful owner?"

"I have a shrewd suspicion, but I am quite willing to impart it to you for a consideration—which is open bribery."

"I suspect I know as much about it as you," she replied, demurely.

"More, very likely. I am quite unable to settle your position in this affair."

"And I'm not going to tell what I know, under any consideration. Good-bye, Mr. Herford; I really must go, unless you detain me on suspicion."

"I wish I dared. Do you really think I am not going to see you again?"

"You are going to put me into the car, if you will be so good."

"I am by no means convinced it ought not to be the Black Maria. And after?"

"After that we may leave it to Fate."

"I decline to leave it to Fate. When one wants a thing, one takes pains——"

"Then," said Geraldine, very sweetly, "leave it to me." She held out her hand as she spoke, and Charles kissed it with a warmth that brought a brighter pink to her already very pink cheek. She moved hurriedly away and went to the kitchen to say good-bye to Mary.

"It is all right, Mary, he will see you through. He is a most determined person; not to be easily turned aside, one can see. Don't ever tell him I said so, but he's ever so much nicer than he was as a boy. I like him *awfully*. He's going to put me into the right car, and then he'll come back to you."

She went back into the other room. "Now I'm ready," she said, with a little nod to Charles, and they went down stairs and into the street together. It was quite dark, and the pavements were filled with crowds of men and women returning from their

work. It is almost impossible to exchange words with a gentleman who is walking a step ahead to make a way for you, and it was not until they had crossed the Bowery and stood waiting for a Madison avenue car that Geraldine could address him with any hope of being heard.

"Thank you very much," she said.

"We part as friends."

"When am I going to see you again?"

"I don't know—exactly. Are you sure you want to see me again?"

"Will you write—will you let me know? If you don't promise, I am quite capable of——"

"Here's the car, I must go; *please*, Mr. Herford. Yes, yes, I promise."

The conductor rang the bell and she was whirled away.

IV

CHARLES threaded his way back mechanically and slowly mounted the stairs again to Mrs. Strong's apartment, where he found that worthy woman anxiously awaiting him.

"Who in the world is that pretty creature?" he demanded. "Where does she come from and how does she know what ought to be a secret between you and me, Mrs. Strong? Is the story she tells of herself true?"

"I'm sure she'd not tell you otherwise, sir," returned Mary. "I've known her these five years, and a finer young woman doesn't live——"

"I suppose you wouldn't tell me where she does live?"

"Well, sir, if you would excuse me——"

"Oh, very well," said Charles. "If I set my mind to it I shall find out. And now to business, Mrs. Strong. Your story, if I understood it rightly yesterday, is that your husband, yielding to sudden temptation—for which I should be the last to blame him, sudden temptation being no stranger to me—annexed, or let us say simply, took certain jewels belonging to a well-known lady whom

he was then serving. For some reason—you think remorse, I incline toward natural reluctance to putting anything so incriminating into the hands of the fences at a time when the papers were making a hue and cry—he did not try to dispose of the things until lately. You found it out, threatened him and got badly treated for interfering. However, you managed to prevent his getting off with the jewels by alarming the neighbors. Then, for some extraordinary reason, you see fit to trust me."

"Forgive me interrupting you, sir, but I recognized you the first minute I saw you. I used to be maid in your aunt's family, Mr. Herford, and a grand lady she was to live with. And then, you see, I did want to get the care of them things out of my hands for that night, for fear my husband might come back."

"He's never been home since?"

"Never, sir, and I'm getting nervous about him. You didn't much like taking the things, I'm afraid, sir?"

"Well, it's a responsibility I should never have assumed if I hadn't been a fool, I suppose. And now the question is, how to get them back to Mrs. Selwin—for of course I guessed they were the much-bewailed Selwin jewels—without bringing *you* into it—I don't feel so tender about your husband. I'm going to a ball there to-night with the Colonel. I suppose it wouldn't do to give the box to the butler and tell him to hand it to Mrs. Selwin?"

Mrs. Strong's face of horror at this suggestion was a study. Charles laughed and patted her arm.

"Don't be troubled," he said. "I'll put them into her hands myself and simply tell her that I am not at liberty to mention how I found them. Will that do? And now I wish you would go over them with me and tell me if they are all here, as far as you know."

He took the package from the inside breast pocket of his coat and laid it on the table. He and Mary were just bending over it when the door burst open and Geraldine flew in, al-

most breathless with the speed at which she had come.

"Sampson is close behind me," she cried. "There is a block on the line just above here, and my car was stopped opposite to one in which I saw him sitting. I knew he was coming here, and I jumped out and ran back as fast as I could to warn you. I saw him get up to leave the car just as I reached the sidewalk. He can't be far behind, and I think he's got another man with him, a man he met at the corner."

"Sampson! Do you mean Mrs. Strong's husband? Are you sure he wasn't alone?"

"The man he met walked along with him, talking."

"God knows what we'll do now," exclaimed Mary, exhibiting a hopeless trust in Providence which exasperated Geraldine.

"Sweep all those things into the bandbox and I'll take it. He'll never notice me if I pass him in the hall. And you, Mr. Herford, stay with Mary. Somebody ought to be with her, I think."

"That is undoubtedly true, but where I stay, these stay," returned Charles, his suspicions aroused again, and hastily making an untidy parcel of the jewels he thrust them back into his pocket. "No, no, Miss Lady Bird, you do not fly away so easily with this treasure. How do I know that the Philistines be really upon us?"

Mary looked blank with surprise and Geraldine stamped her foot. "We have no time for nonsense now," she cried, "it is a question of the safety of the jewels."

"And for that I make myself responsible," returned Charles, setting his lower jaw and looking very obstinate. "Come, you ought not to be here. I can account for myself, but not for you, and though I'm not going to get into trouble if I can help it, I want to feel that you are safe out of the way. You must go."

"I will not go," she said. "This is as much my business as yours, and now I come to think of it, my presence

is a certain protection to Mary, if not to you yourself. I will not go."

"You will," said Charles, "if I have to take you by the shoulders and put you outside the door. Don't argue with me. This is no place for you."

But further argument of any kind was cut short by the sound of footsteps pounding heavily up the stairs.

"Come with me, do, please, miss," whispered Mary, pulling her dress. "You can go out by the other door, the door from the kitchen into the hall, as soon as he's safely in here."

"Go," said Charles, looking at her menacingly, "or I swear I'll hand him back every jewel I've got, and beg his pardon into the bargain!"

Geraldine fairly laughed as she allowed Mary to draw her into the middle room, the contrast between his tame words and his fierce expression was so absurd, but she had no intention of obeying him. On the contrary, she stopped, and made Mary stop at the door leading into the kitchen, and there she turned and observed him.

He had seated himself at the table and was apparently absorbed in writing up some notes with a stubby pencil on scraps of paper. When Sampson stumbled in, not drunk, but slightly flushed and glassy-eyed from having what his wife described as "something taken," he looked up calmly. The man was alone, he saw; that was one good thing.

"Are you the ruffian who nearly killed a woman here yesterday?" he inquired. "You don't look it. You seem rather a decent fellow."

"There wasn't any woman nearly killed here yesterday, sir. What do you mean? I had a bit of a row with my wife, and I see they made a fine story of it. What's it to you, anyway? I don't know you. Who are you?" Sampson stopped short in the middle of the room, glaring.

"I'm the person who made the fine story," answered Charles, continuing to write as if every moment were of importance.

"Oh, you're one of them chaps

they call reporters. Has my wife been talking to you? Where is she?"

"She just went into the other room. Mrs. Strong, your husband is here. I'm afraid she's not a very communicative person, your wife. I couldn't get much of a story from her."

"And a good thing, too," said Sampson, sitting heavily in the rocking-chair. "She'd better not talk, or I'll give her 'what-for' next time. And I don't mean to talk, neither, so I'll bid you good evening, sir."

The sudden ease of this dismissal rather discomposed Charles. He had not yet heard the shutting of the kitchen door, which should have been the signal of Geraldine's departure, and he had no intention of leaving Mrs. Strong to face her husband's surly mood alone unless she herself suggested it. He rose slowly, making a pretense of gathering his papers together.

"You don't want to deny the story, then?" he said. "I'll write down anything you like to tell me."

"You'll write down nothing I tell you," said Sampson, wiping his face with a lavender bordered handkerchief. "I'm all right, but I'm not going to talk," and he smiled a smile of tipsy cunning. "Where's my wife?" he continued, sitting suddenly upright. "Mary, where the 'ell are you?"

There was a suppressed scream, the shutting of a door, and Mrs. Strong ran quickly in from the kitchen.

"What's that man doing in the hall, Strong?" she exclaimed. "He nearly scared the life out of me just now, when I opened the other door."

"And what did you open the door for? Where was you going?" demanded her husband. "Don't you trouble about that man. He's just a friend of mine that's waiting for me. What I want to know is where was you going?"

"Nowhere. I just opened the door because I—I heard a noise, and he stepped out of the shadow and he says to me, 'No you don't,' he says."

"And that's what I say," said Sampson, rolling his blond bullet

head about against the cushion of his chair. "No you don't! You have no business with your head out of the kitchen door when I'm a-calling you. That man he's been watching all day to see you didn't go out of this house, so it's just as well you didn't try it before."

Mary and Mr. Herford exchanged glances.

"Now then, sir," continued the butler, "your road's clear, if hers isn't."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Charles, who realized that Geraldine must be imprisoned in the kitchen. "Your friend seems to be exhibiting great tenacity of purpose. Suppose you call him in and let him identify me as a harmless individual before I trust myself in that dark hall with him. I wasn't built for a fighting man."

Sampson rose to his feet, looking rather bewildered. "You ought to be, by the looks of you," he muttered, as he walked toward the door, "and by the way you thrusts yourself into other people's business."

Charles made a sign to Mary, expecting her to warn her young friend that the coast was clear, but at her first movement Sampson interposed. He seemed to be more sober now and more on the alert.

"Don't you stir," he said. "I want you just where you are. I've got something to settle with you later. Oh, don't you be afraid, sir, I'm not going to injure her, and she's got a tongue in her head that would rouse the neighborhood if I laid a finger on her." He lurched against the table as he spoke and knocked crooked the shade of the glass lamp that Mary had placed there when she took away the tea tray. Stopping to straighten it with over-careful exactness, his glance suddenly fell on the broken spike of the diamond star, which had been overlooked in Charles's hasty collection of the jewels and now lay sparkling aggressively under the circle of brilliant light. For an instant he gazed at it as if hypnotized, and then he turned with a snarl on his wife and caught her by the arm.

"What have you been doing?" he said, savagely. Then with an effort, recovering his caution, he added, turning to Charles: "No poor man likes to find his wife with sparklers like that, sir."

"No," said Charles, "it would naturally excite his cupidity."

Sampson glanced at him, and threw open the door.

"Let this gentleman pass, Joe," he whispered into the hall.

Charles looked at Mrs. Strong. She was really frightened, and he saw it.

"Don't let us have any ill-feeling," he said. "Call your friend in and I'll stand drinks for both of you. Does he know what you like and where to get it?"

"If I call him in," cried Sampson, "it won't be to get no drinks, but to help me clear this room. Now, will you go and leave me with my wife?"

"No, damn you, I won't!" snapped Charles through his teeth, his temper blazing up as the man pushed against him. "Don't touch me! I hate to be touched, but I'll break your neck with pleasure if you interfere with me."

"Interfere with *you*! That's a good one! I'm about tired of this. I say, Joe, I guess you're wanted here!" he called, with a harsh crow of laughter.

Mary gave a little sob and ran forward. But Charles had his shoulder against the door before the man outside could reach it.

"Before your friend comes in," he said, "I may as well warn you, for your own sake, not to drive me to extremities."

"Mind what you are about, for God's sake, Strong!" cried his wife, with more piety. "Mr. Herford means to help us."

"Help us!" echoed Sampson. "Help us! How will he help us?"

"To return—the things, you know—quietly."

"So," said her husband, eyeing her furiously. "That's what you've been about, is it? I wish to the Lord I had done for you yesterday!"

"Now then, my good fellow, you

have blustered enough," Charles was beginning, when the words were stopped on his tongue by the sight of Geraldine hastening through the middle room, and followed by the most aggressive type of the young Bowery tough, with a derby hat on the back of his head and a sticky wave of black hair dependent over one of his leering eyes.

"I guess your front door got stuck, Mr. Strong," said this young man, facetiously, "but I come in by the back way, all right, only I seem to of kinder scared the lady outer where she was hiding."

"You're here, too, are you, miss?" sneered Sampson. "There's no telling what goes on in a man's home behind his back, is there? Secret meetin's, and tale-tellin', and plottin'. Well, I've no quarrel with you yet, as I knows of, and if you are willin' to go now, and go quiet, and *keep* quiet, on your word, for twenty-four hours, why, you may go out of that door this minute and nobody'll hinder you."

"I cannot believe that anybody would try to stop me if I wished to go," said Miss Selwin, with great haughtiness, "but as it happens, I mean to stay."

"Very good, miss, stay," he returned, briefly, and slipping behind Charles, who had started forward when she appeared, he locked the door and put the key into his pocket.

"It's all one to me. Stop where you are, Joe, and don't let no one pass you. Well, sir, if I understand my wife's talk, you proposed to help us in some way. Now I don't propose to be helped by you, nor hindered by you neither. I don't know what stories you may have been told—"

"I told just the truth," lamented Mary, "and I don't know what's come to him, sir!"

"Whatever you were told, *do* you mean to keep quiet about it or not?"

"Only under certain circumstances."

"Might a poor servant inquire what they was, sir?" asked Strong, with elaborate politeness.

"That as soon as the articles in

question can be restored—as nearly as possible in the condition in which they came into your possession—you leave your place and the country at once. I engage to see the—articles returned in safety, and to keep silence—on those terms and on no others.”

“Oh, you engage to see them returned in safety, do you? And perhaps you might even be aware, sir, where they are at present?”

“Certainly. I took them to my rooms last night.”

With a curse Sampson turned again on his wife, but Charles stopped him.

“Mrs. Strong is really not to blame for the discovery of your rather clumsy crimes. That broken ornament lying on the table—the clue to the whole affair—was dropped by you, you fool, and picked up by me at the door of this room yesterday afternoon. The jewels were taken out of the house then, and have been in my possession ever since.”

Sampson gazed stupidly at the young man for a minute. Then his mind began to grasp an idea. The jewels must still be in Mr. Herford's rooms, since he would not have been fool enough to bring them with him at such a time and to such a place. So he reasoned.

“They were taken late yesterday,” he muttered; then, repeating his old formula, “Might a poor servant inquire what you meant to do with them now?”

“Return them to their owner this evening.”

“And claim the reward?”

“It will make a very pleasant addition to my income.”

“Couldn't you spare a bit to the man that's been the means of helping you to it?”

“Not a penny,” returned Charles, laughing, “ingenious as your plea is.”

“Joe,” said Sampson, in a very gentle tone, “just step back and lock the door into the kitchen. Now, if you would give me your address, sir, and a card of admission to your rooms, you'd be performing a very friendly act, which you'd feel all the

better for to-morrow, I do assure you.”

“I do not know how I may feel to-morrow, but at present I cannot see that any benefit would accrue to me from letting you loose in my apartments,” returned Charles.

“If my wife and Miss Geraldine here would step into the next room, perhaps Joe and I could persuade you, sir.”

Charles looked curiously at Miss Selwin. The use of her Christian name by the butler seemed significant of some intimacy, and the prefix of “Miss” suggested respect. He supposed the granddaughter of a house-keeper stood high in her own social circles, but he was still puzzled.

Miss Selwin looked at him reproachfully. If he had yielded to her better judgment the jewels might have been safe in the box on her arm. That he was really uncertain whether to trust her or not she could not seriously believe.

“You can't be so unutterably foolish as to threaten Mr. Herford, Sampson,” she said, moving forward with her hand on Mary's shoulder, “or to throw away the one chance left to you.” She spoke very gently and temperately, but always, as Charles noticed, with the air of a superior to an inferior. He watched her with the utmost interest.

“Oh, can't I, miss!” replied the butler; “well, we'll see.”

“No; you know very well that your safety depends quite as much on my silence as his.”

“I don't think you'll talk much about this afternoon's work, miss. It wouldn't be very easy to explain why you came down to my place to meet this gentleman. But I don't want to tell tales unless I have to.”

“That will do!” said Charles, sharply. “We've had enough of this. You are offered silence and freedom to get out of the country. You refuse it. Very good. Now what do you mean to do?”

“I mean to have those diamonds, and then I'll leave the country as quick as you like. I don't hold much

with promises of silence, neither, sir, so I hope you'll forgive me if you and the young lady is kept here a little longer, maybe, than you calculated when you come. Just to give me a start."

"There's a proverb about 'First catch your hare,'" suggested Charles.

"I'll catch it all right. Will you give me a card to go to your rooms, sir?"

"To the devil, with pleasure, if a card would serve you."

"With written permission to——"

"Don't be a fool!" exclaimed Charles, feigning exasperation; "what good will it do you? Ten to one you'll find someone there."

"I'll take my chances. Will you write it?"

"If I won't, what?"

"Show him your pig sticker, Joe. We don't use pistols in a tenement house, you see, sir—they talk too loud."

Mary gave a faint scream, and her husband clapped his hand roughly over her mouth.

"If you don't want somebody to get hurt, you'll keep quiet this time," he said. "I mean business, and I'll take risks."

"If you kill me, you won't get my written permission to ransack my rooms, you know," remarked Charles.

"A cut doesn't always kill, sir. Will you write?"

Feigning extreme reluctance, Charles slowly took out a card and a pencil. As he did so he noticed that Geraldine had crept up behind Joe, and was standing in an inexplicable attitude, with the bonnet-box clasped in both hands. He wrote hastily a few words on the card and held it out to the butler. Sampson took it, read it, and apparently satisfied, put on his hat and crossed the room to the door. As he took the key from his pocket the voice of his friend recalled him.

"He trowed a magnificent bluff on you dat time, old man," drawled Joe. "He's got 'em on him dis minute. I see de bundle when he put de pencil back."

Charles had hardly time to button his coat before the two men sprang forward, the force with which they threw themselves on him carrying the three across the room almost against the windows.

Mary, shaken off by her husband, whose onslaught she had attempted to check, staggered against the table and set the lamp rocking, so that for the instant her attention was entirely engaged in the endeavor to prevent a conflagration.

Geraldine, cut off from the front windows by the swaying struggles of the three, wavered on the outskirts of the fight just long enough to bring the bandbox down with a prodigious crash over the now hatless head of Joe, and leaving him somewhat incapacitated for the moment, flew to the window of the middle room, with the intention of alarming the neighborhood. Hitherto she had refrained from calling for help, in her desire to save Mary from open scandal, but now she was prepared to scream the house down if necessary. And her powers were by no means inconceivable. As she flung open the window she was confronted by the face of a man whose feet were resting on a long ladder braced against the opposite wall, and whose head was on a level with her arm. Not knowing whether he was a friend or a foe, the word "Help!" with which she had begun her appeal, turned into "Who are you?"

"It's all right," said the man, stepping into the room. "I'm a friend. I thought I might be needed. I came up this way because I didn't want to attract attention. There was someone watching the door. Keep it up, Charley," he shouted, "I'm coming!" and he dashed into the fray, leaving Miss Selwin leaning against the wall, almost paralyzed with astonishment.

She recognized the pale face and tall figure of one of the men she had seen at Charles's rooms that afternoon, but what possible combination of fortunate circumstances had wafted him through the window at the very moment when he was most needed

the liveliest imagination failed to suggest.

Meanwhile the temporary eclipse of Joe had given Charles a chance to snatch the knife from him, and Mrs. Strong, having bestowed the lamp in safety, was now free to cling to her husband's arm, crying out at intervals: "It's a shame for you, Strong, it's a shame for you!" so that the odds were not so much against the young man as had at first appeared. The sudden arrival of the Ghost, together with the violent knocking of outraged curiosity at the door—where the curses, blows and stamping of feet in the apartment had finally caused the other tenants of the house to assemble—completely turned the tables.

Joe was lying on the floor with the remains of the bandbox round his neck and the Ghost sitting on his chest when Geraldine looked in; Sampson had fallen into the rocking-chair and was gasping for breath and glaring at Charles, who, ruefully contemplating the remnants of what had once been a good coat, was winding a handkerchief about his cut fingers.

"What under the sun brings you here, Burke?" Geraldine heard him say.

"Curiosity. Thought there might be trouble. Followed you. Hung about. Stole up stairs once and found a man on the watch. Stole up again, heard you expostulating, and found the door locked. Didn't want to make a row unless it was necessary, so I borrowed a ladder from the hall there, on pretense that the mascot parrot had escaped from Dooley's saloon at the corner—you know Dooley's parrot?—and was sitting on the shutter. Just as I reached the window, prepared to reconnoitre, your mysterious young friend, the milliner, opened it. I stepped in, and I think that's all."

"She's just about the best that is, that girl!" said Charles, enthusiastically. "If you had seen the way she brought that bonnet-box into play just now!"

"Somewhat to the detriment of its former contents," remarked Burke, rising from the recumbent form of the vanquished Joe and picking up the crushed remains of what had once been Mrs. Strong's bonnet.

Geraldine did not wait to hear more, but beckoning to Mary, who was approaching the door with the intention of pacifying the clamor of the neighbors, she moved toward the window, out of sight for a moment of the group in the front room.

"Don't say a word, Mary," she whispered; "I'm going down that ladder and home as fast as I can. I may have got into no end of trouble as it is, and I don't dare stay another minute. If I can I'll come, or send, to-morrow to hear how you are and what has been done about all this. Do you suppose Mr. Herford will still keep it a secret?"

"I don't know, miss, and I wouldn't ask him now. I don't much care what happens, I'm that upset. Only you'll tell Mrs. Selwin I done my best, and oh, dear, oh, dear!" She broke into tears, and Geraldine took her into her strong young arms and kissed her.

"Never mind, dear," she said, "never mind. Come up to see me to-morrow, and no matter what has happened I'll make it right with Grandmamma. Good-night. Don't mention how I went. I don't believe I shall look very dignified. Dear me! what a day this has been!"

"You're never going down that ladder, miss! Will it hold you, do you think?" and Mary leaned fearfully out of the window.

"If it held Mr.—Mr. Burke, if that's his name—it must hold me," returned Miss Selwin, descending. "Wish me a safe return home, Mary, and no questions asked, and if Mr. Herford *should* make any inquiries for me, say I said we should meet again 'at Philippi,' and oh, Mary—" the voice came up from the darkness below—"you needn't say it before—before—Mr. Burke, you know."

Miss Selwin's feet reached the level

of the street as she spoke the last words, and in a moment her figure had disappeared out of the alley-way.

V

MRS. SELWIN WAS, as usual, exceedingly late for dinner. She would not wear the dress laid out for her by her maid, on the ground that the chiffon sleeves were crumpled and ought to have been renewed. In vain the patient young woman reminded her that she herself had declared them fresh enough for another "turn or two." The brocaded gown was sent away, the carefully adjusted headdress not too gently removed and a complicated gold-and-black creation ordered down from the large closet at the top of the house, where the most magnificent garments of Mrs. Selwin's magnificent wardrobe hung, each from its appointed hook, like Bluebeard's wives.

The housemaid who had been despatched for it—the full attention of her own maid being directed to the bunch of curls on the top of Mrs. Selwin's head—nearly got herself dismissed for inadvertently stepping on the sweeping flounces of the train as she entered the room. She was a very small housemaid, and, hold it as high as she would, the voluminous folds of the gown enveloped her from head to foot. She escaped as soon as she could, thanking her stars that her place was usually in my lady's chamber at the times when my lady was out of it.

Never, indeed, had Mrs. Selwin been more troublesome to dress. No young girl going to her first ball could have been more fussily particular, and the maid heaved a sigh of relief as she handed her mistress her gloves, fan and pocket-handkerchief, all of which articles that lady majestically strewed upon the stairs behind her as she made her usual hurried descent. In the hall she paused.

"Tell Miss Geraldine I am sorry I did not have time to see her, and that I shall expect to find her all dressed when I return," she said, accepting

her recovered property as if it had been presented to her for the first time, and stooping her fine shoulders to receive a weight of flame-colored opera cloak. "She must not be late. I cannot bear unpunctuality in young people. And just call Sampson, will you? I want to speak to him about the champagne for supper to-night."

But it appeared, after some circumlocution, that Sampson had gone out.

"Out!" cried Mrs. Selwin. "Out! Then," turning to the trembling footmen who had been waiting for the last twenty minutes to open the door for her, "may I ask who is serving dinner for Miss Geraldine and Mademoiselle?"

Mademoiselle had been served some time ago. Miss Geraldine had not come down. Had, it was believed, not come in since she left the house that afternoon. Had not been seen, at least, since the visit of Miss Primrose.

The eyes and hands of Mrs. Selwin were eloquent.

Was ever unfortunate woman so tried before! What did Sampson mean by absenting himself at such a time? Where was it possible for Miss Geraldine to be since three o'clock in the afternoon? Was she to keep a houseful of lunatics—or idiots who knew nothing and cared less about her interests? Desire Mademoiselle to come down at once! She might be able to give some information about her charge. If not, she might go! Mrs. Selwin did not propose to provide comfortable quarters for incapables. As for Sampson—what! Gone to see about a sick wife? He had no business to have a wife at all! He had come to her as a single man. She had particularly insisted on having a single man, who would sleep in the house and mind the silver. But that was always the way—a good-natured woman was cheated on every side.

The appearance of Mademoiselle, breathless and disheveled, from the regions above, put an end, for the minute, to Mrs. Selwin's lamentations. When had she last seen Mees Selwin?

But directly after luncheon. After that her friend, Mees Polly, had come, and they had talked the one to the other in the room of Mees Selwin for entire hours. Mees Polly, she thought, read aloud continuously also. But when she went to announce to them the tea, she found no person there, but a note from Mees Polly to say Mees Geraldine dine with her and Meesis Primrose, perhaps, and they send her home after. Mademoiselle imagined that Meesis Selwin was aware.

Mrs. Selwin, now that she was aware, was very cross. Mademoiselle knew very well that she did not like these haphazard ways. She should have been informed at once if Miss Geraldine were dining out—a thing Miss Geraldine had no business to do without permission. Mademoiselle would be so obliging now as to put on her hat and go for Miss Selwin as soon as the carriage came back from taking Mrs. Selwin out to dinner. Sampson was to be advised that Mrs. Selwin had something to say to him the instant she returned. Miss Selwin was to be warned that her grandmother was exceedingly displeased.

The door closed behind her and the tumult subsided.

Pleasantly exhilarated by the thought of the trouble impending over his chief, the youngest footman seized the lady's maid round the waist and with back very much bent and arms akimbo, waltzed solemnly down the hall and through the swing door which his senior politely held open for him. Exclamations of wonder and merriment rose from the company in the kitchen as they told their tale.

Mademoiselle hurried up stairs in the ever-ready flood of tears that her emotional nature had at command. She was tired out with the minor preparations for the ball which Mrs. Selwin had entrusted to her care, and the last straw was to be scolded for Geraldine's escapades. She vowed that as soon as that villain child was brought back she would never let her from her sight again. No, never

—that she promised herself. And as she said the words the doorbell rang, and she presently heard in the hall the voice of that "villain child" inquiring, in tones more subdued than usual, whether Mrs. Selwin had yet gone out.

Apparently relieved to hear that she had, Geraldine mounted the stairs, whistling softly to herself, and encountered Mademoiselle at the top.

A long torrent of voluble remonstrance and rebuke followed, which was listened to with a most unusual amount of patience.

"I'm awfully sorry Grandmamma was vexed and scolded you. It really wasn't your fault, was it? Well, never mind, it is all over now, and I won't get you into trouble again, I promise you, Mademoiselle," said Miss Selwin, meekly. "Oh, dear! how tired I am! You've no idea how tired it makes one to—to spend a long afternoon and dine with a female friend. Mrs. Primrose was out, and Polly felt free to ask every foolish question that came into her head. I was glad to come away. Yes, they sent someone home with me, of course. Did you happen to hear Grandmamma say at what time I must be dressed? I shouldn't like to vex her again—so soon. Now I must have a bath, and then I declare I should like to go to bed for an hour or two before the ball, I am so exhausted," with which she shut the door of her room and disappeared from the still tearful eyes of her governess.

After the various excitements of the afternoon—the visit to Charles's rooms, the tea party at Mary's, the general confusion consequent to the return of Sampson, her own escape and hurried flight up town to the house of her friend, Polly's eager questions, her difficulty in answering satisfactorily and discreetly at the same time, Mademoiselle's tirade—after all this the quiet and semi-darkness of her own room were very comforting to her. The sound of the warm water running into her tub was most agreeable, and after she had had her bath she lay on the sofa,

dreamily going over the events of the day, wondering what would become of Sampson and when she should see Charles again, till she really did go to sleep.

When her grandmother returned some time later she was still blinking a little as she sat in front of the glass having her hair done.

Mrs. Selwin swept in in a great flutter. Sampson had not come back, none of the people in the house appeared to have any idea where his perfectly unnecessary wife lived—here her granddaughter became quite pink with suppressed knowledge—she had been obliged to allow the first footman to superintend all the arrangements, and she was exceedingly upset and put out, and Geraldine had added not a little to her anxieties by stopping out for dinner without asking leave.

"But you were out, Grandmamma, and Polly did leave a note. I should think you would have been glad to have me out of the way just to-night. But I'll never do it again—" thankful to have got off so easily—"never. How gorgeous you are, you handsome old person! I never saw you look so well. I believe you are going to enjoy this ball much more than I shall. Nobody will notice me at all when you are by."

Mrs. Selwin became quite appreciably flushed under the slight touch of rouge which she habitually wore.

"You didn't expect me to wear a cap and a high black velvet gown just because you were grown up, did you?" she said. "Though I dare say some people would think it more appropriate. Mrs. Primrose was quite sarcastic about my dress, but then, my dear, those bony women can't stand black-and-gold. I remember I had on a dress something like this the first time Colonel Herford met me after my marriage. It was at a great ball given for the Prince of Wales, I—but what am I talking about? Let me look at you, Geraldine. You don't seem as well as usual, and I am extremely provoked with you. Here, the night of all

others when I want you to look your best, you go and tire yourself out running heaven knows where with Polly Primrose, till you are as white as the wall. I've no patience! This sort of thing must stop."

"Never mind, Grandmamma, you are handsome enough for both of us, and if Colonel Herford admired you in black-and-gold at the Prince of Wales's ball he'll adore you to-night. I assure you I don't care how I look, I—I've got a sort of headache, and you know I don't care so awfully about going out. I can't help having partners, I suppose, as it's my own party, but they won't look at me—they'll just dance with me. I hope I won't have to talk much, for I feel as stupid as a little owl."

"I wish you took more interest in your personal appearance, my dear; it's a girl's principal weapon for fighting the world, and if you don't at least carry yourself as if you believed you were good-looking, nobody will stop to think you so," and Mrs. Selwin drew herself up with all the conscious dignity of experience. "What are you going to wear? Not that pink dress on the bed? You are too pale for pink to-night. Where is your white-and-silver?"

"I'm saving it for Mrs. Bullion's dance. You told me, you know."

"Well, my dear, now I tell you to wear it to-night. I've changed my mind. I'm particularly anxious that you should appear well. Particularly. By the way, do you happen to remember your old playfellow, Charles Herford?"

"Yes—no—a little, I think," gasped Geraldine, turning from pink to carnation color. "He's—he's grown up now, of course."

"Well, he'd have been abnormal if he hadn't," returned Mrs. Selwin. "Yes, he's grown up and quarreled with his father—which should be a lesson to you, Geraldine, to respect your elders more than you do—and I want you to try and be nice to him if the Colonel brings him here to-night. Don't show him any of your hoydenish ways. Be gentle and ladylike,

and if you have an opportunity, try to persuade him to be reconciled to his father, who is only too anxious to do everything in the world to please him. Now do you understand?"

"Yes, Grandmamma," answered Geraldine, in so meek a voice that Mrs. Selwin had to look twice before she could be sure whence it came. "And I think you are quite right about the white-and-silver dress. It would be much more appropriate. Could you puff out my hair a little more, Marcelline? Would it be awful if I rubbed my cheeks with my nail-polish stuff, do you think, Grandmamma?"

Mrs. Selwin expressed just the proper amount of horror and went away, while Geraldine became as eager and interested in her toilet as she had before been listless and indifferent.

When she joined her grandmother down stairs no fault could be found either with her color or her mode of carrying herself.

Somewhat to her alarm, Colonel Herford was already with Mrs. Selwin, but in the shining silver-and-white apparition who approached him so demurely he saw nothing to remind him of Miss Jones, the typewriter. And Geraldine wondered, as she returned his warm greeting, if his son would prove equally blind. She wanted Charles—oh, very much she wanted him—to recognize her at once. She should be so disappointed if he did not.

"Dashed off as if the devil were chasing him," said the Colonel, resuming the narrative he had broken off when she came in. "But it seems that the very best reporters are subject to these sudden demands on their time and attention. My son said so, and it was confirmed by the very charming and well-mannered young man, his friend, who has just been dining with me. I declare I thought of bringing him on here with me, only he said he had an engagement elsewhere. A deuced pleasant young fellow he was. It appears they think a great deal of Charles at the office.

He's considered quite among the best—if not the best, confound him!—and he's only been there a short time. I declare I'm proud of him! Miss Geraldine, you must be kind to him to-night, and I swear if he doesn't fall in love with you the first moment he sees you I'll disown him. By Jove! you're as handsome as a picture—the image of what your grandmother was the first time I ever saw her. I'm sorry Charles couldn't be with us to see you come in, but he promised to join me as soon as he had disposed of his business—something prodigiously important—and he may be here at any minute."

People did, in fact, now begin to arrive in twos and threes, and for more than an hour Geraldine stood beside her grandmother on a little isolated patch of polished floor, curtseying or shaking hands, as the occasion demanded, with some two hundred favored individuals whose names would figure in the papers next morning as being "among those prominent in social circles who attended the brilliant and exclusive ball given by Mrs. Palmstone Selwin for her granddaughter, Miss Geraldine Selwin, one of the most admired of this season's débutantes."

Every time a coated and hatted figure of more than ordinary height passed up the broad, green-carpeted staircase the heart of "one of the most admired of this season's débutantes" beat wildly. But name after name was announced and never that of Mr. Herford. The Colonel hovered disconsolately in the background just behind Mrs. Selwin. The waltz music sounded insistently from the ballroom. Half a dozen men had from time to time come to entreat that Miss Selwin should be released from her duties as hostess, and now she was very much afraid that her grandmother was about to consent. She wanted to stay where she was and see him come in. Suppose he should come after she was gone and never find her in that kaleidoscope of ball dresses that was going round and round with the music! Suppose

he only stayed a few minutes! And then she saw him coming down stairs, very tall and most distinguished, wrestling with a refractory button on his glove.

She was so excited that she could hardly stand still. Her cheeks were rosier than any nail powder could have made them, and her eyes were as large as lakes.

The Colonel sprang forward. "Charles, I thought you had deserted us. Mrs. Selwin, you remember my son? Miss Geraldine, you surely have a good word for your old playfellow?"

"My late playfellow, I think you mean, Colonel," said Geraldine, saucily, holding out her hand. "I'm very glad to see you again, Mr.—Ford."

There was no doubt about the recognition in Charles's eyes—amazed, half-incredulous recognition. He unconsciously gripped the hand of Mrs. Selwin so hard—he happened to be shaking it at the moment—that it felt numb to the finger ends for some time after. Then he quietly offered his arm to Geraldine.

"Mayn't I take you to the ball-room?" he said.

The Colonel and Mrs. Selwin exchanged glances as the pair moved away.

"My dear woman," said the Colonel, triumphantly, "what do you think of that?"

"I don't think much has happened yet," returned Mrs. Selwin, laughing.

"We don't know that," retorted the Colonel, with unconscious truth.

"A great deal depends on mutual first impressions, and I should say they were favorable. Decidedly favorable, by gad! That girl of yours is a handsome young woman, handsomer than I thought she was going to be. Spirited, too! A bit hard to manage, perhaps, but Charles can do it. He knows what discipline is. Now did it strike you, as they walked away, that they were at all like what you and I must have been?"

Mrs. Selwin looked sentimentally

in the direction in which they had disappeared.

"You keep your youth wonderfully, Matilda," said the Colonel.

"I am fifty-six years old, William; don't talk nonsense to me," answered Mrs. Selwin, with a blush. "But you have the figure of a young man still. I think you are a little taller than your son, aren't you?"

Colonel Herford straightened himself.

"Half an inch, half an inch, perhaps. Geraldine will never have your beautiful color, my dear Matilda. The present generation is very well—very fine-looking in its way, but not quite—eh?"

There was a pause.

"In spite of the anxiety she causes you, you will be deuced lonely when that girl marries," remarked the Colonel, staring very hard at nothing. "What do you think of—damn it! there's someone coming to speak to you. No, that old dowager in the red wig stopped him. Take my arm. Let us find some place to sit down. This is your own house, why shouldn't you sit down for a minute? Well—now could you, do you think? You know what I mean."

"My dear Colonel," said Mrs. Selwin, "just wait till the young people are settled."

The young people meanwhile stood at the door of the ballroom for a few minutes, looking at the whirling crowd.

"You don't want to join that merry-go-round?" said Charles, abruptly.

"You do not dance, do you?" asked Geraldine, who loved dancing.

"No. I can't help thinking a man of my height looks absurd when he dances."

"And sometimes when he is standing still."

"You allude possibly to the expression of my speaking countenance when I first caught sight of you transformed."

"I wondered if you would know me again."

"That doesn't speak very well for your perspicacity. I should have

known you anywhere, Miss Lady Bird. And a fine trick you played on me, with your housekeeper grandmother, and your friends in Great Jones street, and your bonnet-boxes. By the way, your bonnet-box turned the tide of battle in my favor. I have to thank you that I escaped whole from the skirmish. It was the quickest, pluckiest thing I ever saw done. Quite worthy of the naughty little girl who used to be my friend——"

"You never took much notice of me in those days, you know."

"Boys are such fools! I almost made up for it to-day, though. The thought of you has been running through and through me like quicksilver. And when I found you had escaped——"

"Do you know—I—I went down that ladder. I was so late, you know."

"I suspected it. And you left me an insulting message."

"Insulting? It wasn't meant to be."

"I don't know what else it means when a vanishing lady sends a mere mortal word that they may meet in the 'sweet by-and-bye.'"

"I never said anything so vulgar. I told Mary to tell you, when—that is—well, rather privately, you know, that we should meet again at Philippi. I thought you'd be so surprised to find I could quote Shakespeare, and I meant, of course, I should come back to see about Mary—or that—oh, well, I knew I should see you here someday with your father. But it *was* a surprise when I heard you were coming to-night."

"Were you glad?"

"I watched the door every time a man went up stairs. Tell me about Mary."

"She is all right. I'll tell you all about it in a minute. How did you get home?"

"Oh, easily—I wasn't frightened. No one suspects! I dined with Miss Primrose. Shall we move away from here? Someone may want to dance with me, you know, and I might have to say 'yes.'"

"Only over my dead body. Where shall we go? Isn't there a conservatory or something? You know the house."

"I wonder if Grandmamma would find fault."

"She won't see. She's talking to my father. She must have been a fine-looking woman in her day, Mrs. Selwin."

"Your father says I am the image of her."

"Don't believe him. No woman in the world could be as pretty as you are at this minute. The elder generation is all very well, but——"

"I was just thinking you were even taller than the Colonel."

"Oh, half an inch, perhaps. But you wanted to hear about the people in Great Jones street. There, no one will ever find us under that enormous palm. Well—I let him off—all for the sake of you and your Mary—and a fine fool I was, I suppose; but I thought if I gave him over to the police the whole thing would come out and you might be dragged in, so I made up my mind to get him quietly out of the country."

"That was kind of you. Mary must have been pleased."

"I'm afraid she'll never be pleased with him again, but she'll try to reform him and make the best of him, I suppose, even now."

"And that dreadful young man with the knife?"

"Dismissed, without the knife and with a warning that I hope he'll take to heart for some time to come."

"And the jewels?"

"I brought them with me, of course. I meant to have stopped at the hotel early enough to have come up here with my father, told him the story—that is, as much of it as was necessary—and consulted him about how best to return them. But he had already started, so I found his man, the faithful Bullock, and brought him along with me, and he's keeping guard over the diamonds at this minute."

"It's as good as a play, isn't it?" said Miss Selwin.

"That depends on how it ends. In

plays the hero—I'm the hero—is always rewarded with the hand of the heroine—you're the heroine—they are blessed by their stage parents—the Colonel and Mrs. Selwin, you know—and applauded by the audience. Then they are supposed to live happily ever after. Now I never thought I should care about being engaged to anybody, it's a mongrel sort of period at best, but I want to see you every day from now on indefinitely, and I don't see any other way to manage it, do you? Would you mind? I know I was a horrid boy, but really I'm not so bad as a man."

"I'm going to tell you something I never thought I should tell anybody. I adored you when you were a boy."

"And I adore you now you are a woman. From the first moment I saw you with that bandbox—"

"I'm so glad I took it to Mary. You know it was true what I told you—every word. She used to live with us—with Grandmamma and me. She was with us for five years, and she took care of me when I was ill, so, of course, I went to her when she wanted me. At least I tried to go, that first day when you met me and gave me the gold piece. Why, it was only yesterday. Doesn't it seem long ago?"

"It's against the law to mutilate coin, but before I came out this evening I made a hole in that gold piece and hung it on my watch chain."

"It belongs by right to me, I think; I'll give you the five-dollar bill Mary wouldn't take for it."

"You'd better keep that to help you buy her a new bonnet. The other has suffered a good deal in the life-saving business, you most quick and clever and brave—"

"And bold! Grandmamma is always lamenting that I am bold. She told me to be very gentle to-night, and not shock you with my hoydenish ways."

"You didn't happen to tell her that I liked your ways so much that I was already head over ears in love with you?"

"Oh, are you *really*?"

"Haven't I been telling you so for the last twenty minutes?"

"Oh, you told me so long before *that*," said Miss Selwin, "but I could not be sure you meant it, and—I do like you very much," she added, ingenuously. "This afternoon, before I knew who you were, when I thought I probably ought not to like you, I began."

"That was just the time to begin," said Charles, laughing. "Well, you haven't said a word to my proposition, or rather, I should say, my proposal."

"I haven't a word to say—against it," she returned, shyly.

"Then I suppose I may—"

"You may, if you like," murmured Miss Selwin. "I remember I cried once when you went back to school without kissing me."

"That's *one* thing for which you shall never again shed a tear," declared Charles.

VI

COLONEL HERFORD and Mrs. Selwin were standing together in the drawing-room when the last guest drove away. The ball had been an undoubted success, and if Charles's attentions to Geraldine had been a trifle more conspicuous than the strictest etiquette should countenance, it was a fault in the right direction.

"It is love at first sight," declared Colonel Herford. "I could see by his expression that he admired her. He will tell me before long, and then it will be my time to say, 'And what do you propose to support a wife on, sir? You will return to your law studies at once.'"

"You mean to be firm, William?"

"Have I ever failed in maintaining discipline, Matilda?"

Charles and Geraldine approached them at this moment. They came from the hall, where, could the Colonel's eyes have reached, he would have seen the discreet Bullock handing a carefully sealed box to the young man.

"I've got a little speech to make to you, Mrs. Selwin," Charles said, ad-

vancing, "and I don't know how to begin. I have lately found two things belonging to you. One I want to return to you at once, and the other—the other—I want your permission to keep, though I am quite well aware that I have no possible business to make such a request at such a time.

. . . You lost some valuable jewels, I believe, several months ago. I was put on the track of them by a person whom I have promised not to name, and I recovered them, with some difficulty, to-night. Here they are." He put the box into her hand as he spoke. "I hope you will find most of them in good order. As far as I know only one ornament has been injured. The other thing I have found is a little girl I used to know who has turned into a most beautiful lady, whom I don't know at all, but with whom I have fallen very violently in love. Please, Mrs. Selwin, may I marry Geraldine?"

"Already!" gasped Mrs. Selwin, nearly dropping the box, which she had been too much amazed to open.

"Well, whenever she is ready, of course. I don't want to be unreasonable."

"Preposterous!" exclaimed the Colonel, secretly delighted. "May I ask, sir, on what you propose to support a wife? You have thrown away your allowance, abandoned the study of your profession, and I hardly think you will find your present income sufficient for yourself and a young lady brought up as Miss Geraldine has been."

"I never meant to abandon my profession, sir," observed Charles. "I only said I intended to earn for myself the money to continue what you so trustingly describe as my 'studies.'"

"And have you done so, sir?" cried the Colonel. "On my word, your audacity is astounding."

"If Mrs. Selwin is a woman of her word, as I hope for your sake, sir, she is," replied his son, unabashed, "I think you will find I have won quite a

considerable reward—enough to enable me to pursue a most protracted course of study."

"Reward! *Reward!*" exclaimed Colonel Herford.

"Mrs. Selwin has got back her jewels," said Charles, "as she will see if she opens that box."

"But how? Why—where—?" began Mrs. Selwin.

"You impudent young scoundrel!" interrupted the Colonel, and together they tore off the wrappings and opened the box.

"How did you become possessed of these, Charles?" inquired his father. "Most extraordinary!"

"I am not at liberty to say, sir, except that in my present business one comes across all sorts of curious things. Do you consider that I have made my word good? Technically, I mean, for of course I have no intention of taking anything but her granddaughter from Mrs. Selwin."

The Colonel rubbed the back of his head.

"Will you send me back to Cambridge?" inquired his son, "and let me marry Miss Selwin in the Spring? If Mrs. Selwin will give her consent about *her* charge, I'll give my consent about mine."

"What the devil do you mean, sir?" roared his father.

"Mrs. Selwin understands," said Charles, laughing. And he kissed her hand.

"Aren't you going to say anything, Grandmamma?" inquired Geraldine.

"My dear," returned that lady, "there doesn't seem anything left for me to say. You seem to have settled it all, except what I am to do with the money I offered for the recovery of these troublesome things."

"If I might suggest," said Charles, "the disposition of a little of it, I should say give it to Geraldine for a protégée of hers. I know she wants to provide——"

"A new bonnet for Mary," interrupted Geraldine.



SUMMER SHADOWGRAPHS

IT is only a question of time when love's young dream becomes a nightmare.

Wealth and happiness always seem to go together to the man who has neither.

The girl whose face is her fortune soon finds that Father Time is a great spendthrift.

Although you can't choose your ancestors you can pick out your coat-of-arms.

A wit is a man who says things about other people that they are too polite to say about him.

A blunderbuss—kissing the wrong girl.

A woman can never make a fool of a man unless he meets her half-way.

The future has no cure for the past.

To gain experience would bankrupt a millionaire.

The man who is too mean to live generally reaches a green old age.

Forgetfulness is the court of bankruptcy that relieves us of our debts of gratitude.

JAMES JAY O'CONNELL.



HIS LARGE FAMILY

A BARON afflicted with gout
 Would have no thin servants about;
 And they all, without fail,
 Drank so freely of ale
 That even the porter was stout!

BLANCHE ELIZABETH WADE.



PAINTING THE LILY

ELLA—Miss Bloomly says her face is her fortune.

STELLA—Clever girl; she seems to have made most of her money.



DESPAIR PERSONIFIED

BISHOP—Sterlingworth looks as if he had loved and lost, doesn't he?

BARKER—Yes, and didn't get his presents back.

THE WISH THAT CAME TRUE

(A GRIMM TALE MADE GAY)

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

AN excellent peasant of character pleasant
Once lived in a wood with his wife.
He was cheerful and docile, but such an old fossil
You wouldn't meet twice in your life!
His notions were all without reason or rhyme;
Such dulness in anyone else were a crime,
But the errors pig-headed to which he was wedded
Were so deep-imbedded they touched the sublime!

He frequently stated such quite antiquated
And singular doctrines as these:
"Do good unto others! All men are your brothers!"
(Of course he forgot the Chinese.)
He said that all men were born equal and free
(That's true if they live on this side of the sea!);
That truth should be spoken, and pledges unbroken
(Now where, by that token, would most of us be?).

One day, as his pottage he ate in his cottage,
A fairy stepped up to the door;
Upon it she hammered, and meekly she stammered:
"A morsel of food, I implore!"
He gave her sardines and a biscuit or two,
And she said with a smile when her luncheon was through,
"Because of these dishes of bread and of fishes
The first of your wishes I'll make to come true."

That nincompoop peasant accepted the present
(As anyone probably would),
And thinking her bounty to turn to account, he
Said: "*Now* I'll do somebody good!
I won't ask a thing for myself or my wife,
But I'll make all my neighbors with happiness rife;
Whate'er their conditions, henceforward physicians
And indispositions they're rid of for life!"

These words energetic the fairy's prophetic
Announcement brought instantly true;
With singular quickness each victim of sickness
Was made over better than new.
And people who formerly thought they were doomed,
With almost obstreperous healthiness bloomed;
And each had some platitude, teeming with gratitude,
For the new attitude life had assumed.

THE SMART SET

Our friends' satisfaction concerning his action
 Was keen, but exceedingly brief;
 The wrathful condition of every physician
 In town was surpassing belief.
 Professional nurses were plunged in despair,
 And chemists shook passionate fists in the air;
 They called at his dwelling, with violence swelling,
 His greeting repelling with arrogant stare.

They beat and they battered, they slammed and they shattered,
 And did him such serious harm
 That, after their labors, his wife told the neighbors
 They caused her excessive alarm.
 They then set to work on his various ills,
 And plied him with liniment, powders and pills,
 And charged him so dearly that all of them nearly
 Earned double the yearly amount of their bills.

This moral by the tale is taught:
 The wish is father to the thought.
 (We'd oftentimes escape the worst
 If but the thinking part came first!)



VILLAINS! VIPERS!

MRS. RUTHVEN—It's a shame that reporters are permitted to put the names of society people in the papers.
 MRS. SMYTHE—Indeed it is, my dear. They always spell mine wrong.



IN BIBLE TIMES

"YOUR daughter is very ill."
 "But you must save her, doctor; she is the baby of the family, and we can't lose her; she is only ninety-seven years old."



UNITED IN MISFORTUNE

"THOSE two fellows are engaged to the same girl."
 "What are they going to do about it?"
 "They are praying for a dark horse."

UNTYING THE KNOT

By Mrs. Sherwood

DOUBTLESS it is just as well that humanity no longer believes in that intense love which became a strange idolatry in the Middle Ages, and which rivaled religion in the days of the return to the belief that the ancient Venus is not dead, but only hidden for a time in the caves of the Venusberg; as well, too, that we do not believe in the return of those old pagan gods—Apollo and Jove and Saturn and Mars and the rest—who are said to be still going to and fro over the earth under all sorts of disguises. The rebellious element of love is practically unknown to the modern man and woman, the poet and the romancer. Victor Hugo, however, has made it very fascinating reading in "Notre Dame de Paris." It is found, also, in the history of Abélard and the legend of Tannhäuser. In the all-embracing confusion of the Middle Ages this rebellious element, this sinister claim for liberty of heart and thought, comes to the surface. It gave to the Franciscan Order its poetry, its mysticism and its illumination. Strange dreams came into the realm of flowery rhetoric, while nuns and monks talked of the final dispensation of a "spirit of freedom," and loved each other because, as with many people, they should not have done so.

An early French story, "Aucassin and Nicolette," contains the most famous expression of this pagan passion. It is the answer *Aucassin* gives when he is threatened with the pains of Hell if he makes *Nicolette* his wife. *Aucassin* was a creature wholly of the affections and the senses. He sees in those who would enter Para-

dise only a company of feeble, aged priests, who cling day and night to the chapel altars, barefooted or in patched sandals. For the sake of *Nicolette*, that sweet woman whom he so much loves, he would fain go into Hell along with the good scholars, the actors, the fine horsemen, the men of fashion—"the peerage," as they called them even in the old days of the troubadours—"and the fair, courteous ladies who had two or three chevaliers apiece besides their own true lords," all gay with music and in their furs, *vair et gris*. Such a passion as that which made Dante faint away led *Aucassin* forth to battle—the very ideal of the Provençal love-god, a beautiful youth, fair as the morning. As he rides through the gates the great malady of his love comes on him, the bridle falls from his hands, and like one who sleeps walking, he is carried on into the midst of his enemies and hears them talking together "how they may most conveniently kill him."

But now that sort of love, which might lead naturally to divorce, has gone out. We do not find General Sherman, General Grant, the German Emperor, or any other typical man, yielding to it, although very good lovers and admirable husbands. It is to the old French *fabliaux* and to Dante and to Petrararch that we must go back for it; we must read up that revival of classical antiquity to which we give the name of "Renaissance" before we find an *Aucassin* and *Nicolette*. As well look in the town of Portland, Maine, or in Chicago, for the stained glass windows of Chartres, the sculp-

tures of the Cathedral of Burgos, the glorious architecture of Rheims, as hope to find these doctrines of romantic love out of the poetry of Provence and in this practical age.

What do we find in its place? A very delicious thing indeed. We find a man and a woman loving each other beyond all things, married and at home—a very nice dwelling and immensely comfortable. Presently a new expression comes into the face of the young woman, a smile of rapturous happiness, and you ask, with a certain *empressment*: "How is the boy?" Yes, the boy has arrived, and the woman is in an earthly paradise. So marriage goes on, and other boys and girls arrive, and this prosperous *Nicolette* does not have to build a hut of flowers in the wilderness to let *Aucassin* know the "way she has gone." She sits at home, tending the baby and receiving roses brought by a messenger boy instead of a troubadour, and always she is beautifully dressed, carefully tended, admired and praised, with carriages and a box at the opera. And then some morning we hear that she has gone to seek a divorce. Why and wherefore?

Poor *Aucassin* and *Nicolette* had no such bower of refuge, no such comforts, conveniences and opportunities for happiness as the young married pair of to-day.

Aucassin was put in prison, and *Nicolette* remained shut up in her chamber. It was Summer time, in the month of May, when the days were warm and clear and the nights serene.

One night *Nicolette*, lying on her bed, saw the bright moonshine through the little window and heard the nightingale sing in the garden, and then came the memory of *Aucassin* whom she so much loved. He was in a neighboring tower, and at much inconvenience and damage to her delicate hands she made a ladder of ropes and went to him.

Her hair was yellow, in small curls, her smiling eyes blue-green, her face clear, the little lips very red and the teeth small and white. The daisies which she crushed in passing looked dark beneath her feet. She walked as fast as she could until she came to the tower where *Aucassin* was imprisoned. She

pressed herself against the pillars and heard *Aucassin* crying bitterly within, and when she had listened awhile she began to speak.

So much for the Middle Ages. Now we must read it thus:

As Harry Brownheadman returned from the office of the Central Traction Company to his house, No. 18 Clamartine avenue, United States, what was his horror to find that Mrs. Brownheadman had eloped with *Aucassin Vidal, Esq.*!

One thing, then, that we have in common with that outbreak of imagination and passion which we call the Middle Ages is a spirit of rebellion against the moral and religious ideas of the time. Just as man has conquered the earth, just as life has become luxurious, comfortable and safe, and with nothing left to complain of but the bad behavior of the waiter-girl and the adulteration of red pepper and other groceries, the modern *Aucassin* or *Nicolette* chooses to run away.

There is always that mysterious explanation, incompatibility. You see, those first fortunate lovers had no opportunity of getting tired of each other; the way *Aucassin* took his coffee did not annoy *Nicolette*. Perhaps, for one reason, because coffee had not yet been introduced into France. Thus modern luxury comes in as an explanation. The lover who tossed off his "stoup of wine" from his saddle bow could not become a wearisome old poke at the breakfast table. Our luxurious habits of living to-day become monotonous.

The fifteenth century was an impassioned age. They spoke of love with much of the unction and sacredness of a hymn. There was that strange blending of sentiment with the painful embarrassments of daily life. Those troublesome necessities to which man has been exposed since the primitive ages were all raised and consecrated by poetry into the service of Love. Apollo kept the cows of Admetus, and those gods who got into Germany had to drink beer instead of nectar. Apollo betrayed himself by his beautiful singing, and

made all the women sick. He was the Jean de Reszké, the Paderewski of his day, and his rivals strove to kill him; someone got buried for him, and when they thrust a stake into his grave, lo! it was empty. Jean de Reszké had left.

He had gone back to Europe, no doubt, but it was all so much more poetical than the summoning of the co-respondent before Judge Walsingham, who has forty-two cases on the docket, that we cannot make the two ages fit in at all.

The curious fact remains that as we improve on marriage, its comforts and its apparent happiness, we see men and women striving all the more to get apart, to untie the knot that from the days of Jupiter and Juno has never been unfailingly successful in the tying.

I once met in Europe a most interesting divorcée. She gave me a part of her history, which, as she has gone beyond this world, it can do no harm to relate. If it will lead any divorcée to tell her story in the same unvarnished fashion it will do some good, for I believe most of the quarrels and evils of the disintegration of the home come from blunders and mistakes.

"He was so perfect that I hated him," she began. "I can always believe the story of that wife murderer who pushed his wife off the Alps and down the precipice because she would not lose her temper. He never lost his, or pretended he did not."

And yet as she told her story I could but sympathize with the divorcée. She went on to say: "You see, I was a very great beauty; I had always been admired; I was the belle of Moscow and the Russian Court when Alexis won my love. How charming he was! and how delightful that first year! I gave my whole heart to him, and he treated me with only a cold, ceremonious politeness."

Hers was a life without high aims or unselfish purpose; she had lived the hollow, artificial life of a woman of the world, and had been much flattered. Alexis never flattered, had no *petits soins*, and what was this young

woman to do? She missed her atmosphere; she could not breathe in the cold, frigid air of non-appreciation. So after a few years she left Alexis, unable to voice against him one single vice! He was simply an iceberg.

The most fertile cause that the lawyers and the judges say leads to divorce is the desire of the women for more money and more luxury. "My meat shall all come in Indian shell dishes of agate set in gold and studded with emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths and rubies, and I will eat my broths with spoons of amber headed with diamonds and carbuncles," as old Ben Jonson imagined the case.

Sir Epicure Mammon becomes the suitor to the young and unsatisfied wife of a poor man. *Sir Epicure* says to his cook, "*There's gold; go forth and be a knight.*" The modern English novel gives us this cause for the untying of the knot with nauseous particularity. "This is the day wherein to all my friends I will pronounce the happy words, Be rich." But take away this temptation, and how do you gain the explanation? It is the very rich who most successfully untie the knot nowadays. Indeed, it is the favorite device of the moralist to abuse wealth and luxury as causes of divorce, but in fact the beloved "love in a cottage" of the poets has not been a palladium against the failure of marriage. So many and so apparently immaterial are the reasons advanced that he who reads in the papers the story of the divorce court feels that he has come to trifle, "to sport with human follies, not with crimes."

It was in England that I first saw Lady Lyonesse at a Queen's ball. She was of Saxon fairness, with the peerless neck and arms of a young Englishwoman, a peeress, and married to a very rich man. Indeed, she was most enviable, most lovely. She had everything that human nature can crave; she was in the best set; she had not, like a certain heroine, to become a "self-made

Countess," that is, she had not to create for herself an *individual* distinction; something was hers more honorable than merely to be born a fine lady; she had her own distinction, a personality, and a most attractive one. She seemed very happy, a young wife and mother, yet not long after this she ran away with Captain Dangerous, and was *déclassée* forever after. I met her many years later as the second wife of a German, a great invalid; she then was Lady Lucile Jutenhofman.

She was recognized by half her old friends and cut by the rest. Her relatives spoke to her and called her "Lucile." She took a back seat in the great world with a patient sort of winning smile on her lips, and did not look unhappy. Herr Jutenhofman was not romantic looking, nor did he seem to know or to care whether people noticed his wife or not. He was very good to her, and brought her flowers every day, which he handed her, at Homburg, from his invalid chair as she sat unrecognized in the background. A greater contrast than that between the past and the present of this superb woman could hardly be imagined, and yet, as I asked the explanation from her intimate friend, and observed the woman, I could never hear that she had been driven to this extraordinary act by any cruelty or wrong on the part of Lyonesse. He, it was said, remained madly in love with her to the end.

However, in this sober age I do not believe in that "madly in love" condition that belonged to *Aucassin* and *Nicolette*. I believe Lyonesse was mortified and humiliated, and that he had loved her better than she had loved him; but what she saw in Mr. Jutenhofman—that is the question! In her outward behavior she was a preëminently modest and proper woman. Not a *lionne*, not a trifler, not a flirt, she had, however, given the world for love and considered it well lost. Jutenhofman was now her all. Unluckily the tragedy remains—she left a young daughter in Eng-

land who cannot speak her mother's name.

A certain marquis in Paris who married an American widow declared that he left her because she would constantly have the sofas upholstered in the house. He averred that he never went home that the parlor sofa was not being torn out, with the straw or the stuffing all on the floor. His beautiful Parisian *ménage*, to which he took her as a very pampered and seemingly enviable bride, was never a place where he could sit down. There was a determinate spirit of disintegration toward his furniture, she steadily pursuing this course for two years, during which time she could have had a political salon or a social salon of the highest; she could have given luncheons over whose perfection the envious American colony would have wept; she could have had artists in all the arts and princes galore at her teas, but she continued to disembowel the sofas, until the end was divorce, and after ten years, showing me a bracelet which he had given her in the honeymoon, she said, "Well, he was rather nice. I rather liked him. You see, this is a true lover's knot." Unluckily it was easily untied, in reality if not in jewelry.

After Caprice and Folly have had their say, it is easy enough to explain why the greater and more tragic elements come in; the law and the newspapers explain all that, and we have nothing to say about them. To the dark and pitiful phase of human imperfection let us turn a blind eye and a deaf ear.

Those married people who love each other, and who get on well together, have learned early to be exceedingly careful of little things, to forgive readily, to give up patiently, to be always the first to concede. "If one throws fire, let the other throw water."

I once knew a wife who won over a very bad-tempered and captious husband by her tact in laughing at his jokes—no one else ever saw the least fun in them—but she held both her

sides, and she really gained for him what he coveted, the reputation of being a wit. She was clever, and she made up impromptus for him, which she introduced very neatly at dinner parties.

"Did you hear," she would say, "what Mr. Williamjohn said at the picture gallery the other day?" Then came a witticism. Thus she made him over into a very agreeable and amiable man. He sulked at thirty, but at fifty he is quite endurable.

That pair will not get a divorce, and Mr. Williamjohn grows more popular every year. It is the woman generally who suffers after the divorce court. Mrs. Williamjohn showed her good sense. No one cares for our disappointment or degradation; our failures are immensely uninteresting, but our successes, our cheerfulness, our wit and our attempts to make our Mr. Williamjohns "wits"—these are laughed at, and with, and are better than tears.

Judge Brown, of the Supreme Court at Washington, who has had much to do with divorce, approves it because, he says, two people who make each other unhappy were not made to live together, and will do more mischief, if they attempt to do so, than they will if they separate. The wrong done to the children, to society, to the social edifice, the laws of property and to the State, he fully recognizes, but he considers these evils, monstrous as they are, as less dangerous than the fastening together of two antagonistic tempers by an enforced and rasping chain.

It is curious that the effect of the Church, the old Roman Catholic Church, in forbidding divorce has outlasted its power even in France. There is a greater public sentiment against divorce in France than in America, and yet there is a remarkable decline of ecclesiastical authority there as elsewhere, which is proved by the avowed independence of scientific writers and thinkers, and the open opposition of nearly all European governments. The secular power resists the ecclesiastical in Ger-

many and Spain; in France it establishes a form of government which the Church detests; in Switzerland it resists the whole power of the Papacy; in Italy it seizes the sacred territory and plants itself within the very walls of Rome. Tradition has, however, outlived the weakening of this great influence on men, morals and manners in the matter of marriage, and divorce is most unpopular in all those countries. It reached its culmination of unpopularity, however, at the Court of Victoria, where no divorcée could be presented, no matter how blameless. Here in this country, where marriage is of vastly more importance, as being the only cement that holds society together, it is of the least strength, and the knot is most easily untied. Nor do the divorcées always suffer.

Our ignorance on this subject grows more dense as we find out that the only marriages we know anything about are the unhappy ones, and they are really no marriages at all; they bear the same relation to a true marriage as a disease does to health; and nature must bring about the recovery of happiness or the endurable peace of separation before we find this out.

A former prejudice against the marriage of professional men—poets, authors, scientists and artists—is beginning to die out, as women become more cultivated. "I can make as good a pie as if I had not studied Greek," says one clever woman, who keeps her learned husband very well fed. The former want of intelligence in the education of women was indeed very unfavorable for happiness. An accomplished professor of Harvard said, thirty years ago, "As for my wife, she knew nothing when I married her, and when I tried to teach her something it made her angry, and I gave it up." It is perhaps very bad for the happiness of an intellectual woman that she rarely hears the truth . . . from men—notice the pause. When a philosopher speaks to a lady it is like some clockmaker putting back the hands

of a clock; he does not think her intellect runs quite so fast as his does. Men disguise their higher thoughts toward women and rarely talk to them with that rough frankness which they use toward each other, even at Cornell University. It was once said of an old Scotch professor who went off to see a friend every evening and drink whiskey and talk philosophy, that "all the whiskey in Scotland would not make him talk philosophy to his wife." Now it is easy to imagine that when a man sits down every day to a splendid intellectual banquet, from which his wife is excluded, that she should grow jealous of his professional studies and that a sort of unhappiness should take possession of both of them.

But there is such a thing as the happy intellectual marriage. No one can help pitying those who sit down to a matrimonial life, tête-à-tête, with one stupid and the other clever; each should try, in an emulative spirit, to find out wherein the other is clever. There should be for every grade of the masculine intellect a corresponding grade of the feminine intellect. It exists, no doubt, and would repay the curious.

But few men start out to marry an intellectual princess; they marry the best dancer, the prettiest or the richest girl, and when they find out the dismal fact that no such thing as mental companionship is possible, they blame the girl. The French professor in his little town is far wiser; he looks on a wife as an upper domestic servant, necessary to his small means; she is good and devoted to him and makes him very happy and comfortable, although quite independent of her presence. They walk out together twice a week, perhaps, and never get divorced; but what they talk about during these conjugal promenades is a question.

It is here in our blessed land of liberty, here where women are their husbands' equal, are the best of pupils as well as wives and mothers, and where there are the most chivalrous husbands, it is here that divorce

flourishes. It is an unanswerable question why.

While luxury may be said to enervate, there is a kind of relative poverty that leads most young people to the best they can mutually do for the happiness of each other and the welfare of the children. We see this in the happy homes and the memorable and noble lives that have no history, but into this last refuge of the ideal marriage there will still come the eccentricity, the selfishness, the imperfection, of the one or the other—the canker in the rose.

George Sand wrote a very good novel called "Valvedre," of a man of science and his wife, *Alida*, who was jealous of his profession. She thought study was her rival, and that "love was only possible in idleness." She made a most terrible mistake; idleness is the very worst of foes to married happiness. The getting bored, the fear of the too great perfection of one or the other, that cold, icy, impersonal thing, that something called marriage which is a little paler than nature, did not enter *Aucassin's* mind when he dared all the bishops, priests and deacons.

One great cause of infelicity in marriage is the different degrees of hospitality in the mismated pair. "Is this Professor Mannicheu's house?" asked a newcomer at New Haven, as he was shown into a parlor, "for if it is I am asked here to tea." "No," said the astonished wife, "then it is not, indeed, for my husband never asks anybody to tea."

To enumerate the dinners given in New York, and indeed from Newport to Nebraska in one month, there would seem to be a great unanimity of sentiment between husbands and wives as to hospitality. The desire is to feed anybody and everybody. Few are the husbands who do not ask "anybody" to tea, and generally to something better, and yet we find this morose disposition to inhospitality much argued in the courts as a reason for divorce.

It is a curious circumstance that while the divorced wife almost always

marries, the divorced husband rarely does. It is a plaintive plea for woman's love of a home and a fireside for protection; it is in itself a great sermon in favor of marriage, that a sad experience has not so disillusioned her but that she will willingly take the terrible oath again.

Who that ever hears it at a fashionable wedding does not shudder that any two people can ever dare to say what every bride and bridegroom must say! The language of the Prayer Book is terribly Anglo-Saxon! There are no euphemisms in it, yet on how many tombstones shall we find engraved—"For as God had united them in their lives in one accord, so they were not divided in their death?"

Perhaps to the lack of romantic love do we owe the decay of poetry. It would be impossible to imagine today any of our modern authors writing what the authors of the fifteenth century called a "*chanteable*," a tale told in prose, but with its incidents helped forward by songs inserted at irregular intervals, much of it in burlesque, yet with shadings of different quality, of deeper color—expressions of the ideal intensity of Love, even of Love's power and of the tyranny of him whom Dante has immortalized as "the Lord of terrible aspect." The profound and energetic spirit of the Provençal poetry carries onward this great earnestness of Dante on the great subject into many subsequent ages.

It is a part of the infelicity of the imperfect marriage that many a pair go through life never seeing each other or understanding each other at their best, as in those strangely twisted staircases of the châteaux of the country of the Loire, where two people may mount to the tower and descend a dozen times a day without ever meeting, always passing each other unseen. Between such a pair a great, impenetrable wall is raised, the wall of lack of sympathy. Such an accident of nature is a pure misfortune.

Among Royalties, the late Prince Consort of England seems to have

been a great success as a husband. He had the gift of subordinating his own individuality for the good of England and his family. The Emperor is a pattern of the decent, devoted German husband. The King of Italy, poor murdered Humbert, was said to be *volage*, but his wife was so wise and so true that they appeared a perfect picture of domestic happiness. The marriage of Amadeo to his beautiful first wife was ideal. Thrones have not always been so very lonely places. The Comte de Paris made a most excellent husband, and high up among the celebrated women of England we must mention the lately deceased Duchess of Cleveland, who married, when a beautiful young widow, a man much older than herself, and gave herself up entirely to his tastes and wishes, spending long, dreary days in the Winter of cold England at the famous "Battle Abbey," when her soul sighed for the softer airs of Palestine. She inherited that love of wandering which induced her eccentric aunt, Lady Hester Stanhope, to go and live in the desert, and finally to marry a Sheik, but as the old Duke would not even go to Nice for the Winter, the Duchess bravely stayed by his side until he died, at eighty-nine. Then she took a maid and a courier, and departed for the ends of the earth. No Englishman in the depths of the Dark Continent was ever safe from a visit at odd moments from her Grace of Cleveland, and she went often to France, which she loved; she believed very much in Gallic wit and Gallic chivalry, qualities not appreciated at "Battle Abbey." Her son, Lord Rosebery, gets much of his power, wit and accomplishment from this wandering mother.

Lady Duff Gordon was not so considerate. She wanted to go off, "strange countries for to see," and she went, leaving Sir Alexander at home while she lived in Egypt. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu did the same, and Mr. Wortley Montagu did not see her in thirty years, although they corresponded most amiably.

However, when two people can

thus afford to disagree and separate and live in different realms, there is no need of divorce. That need arises from the strain of having to see each other around all the time. General Scott and his wife always went to Europe in different ships, yet Mrs. Scott wrote beautiful verses to the General.

Old Mrs. Gaines used to say, "There is only one point on which

Mrs. Scott and I agree—we both hate General Scott."

We leave the subject where we took it up, hoping that some mighty seer will rise, some spiritualist who can read the mystic love of the human heart, some Christian Scientist who can cure all ills, who will tie this knot so much better than it has been tied that "no knife can cut its love in two."



TWILIGHT IN THE CITY

THE violent billows of the tide of day,
Unintermittent in their thunder tone,
Have fallen at last into a minor moan,
Like a retreating surf-sound far away;
The sunset sky shades softly into gray,
And a faint breeze from off the ocean blown
Up the long avenues of cruel stone
Brings soothing reminiscences of spray.

The strenuous step relaxes; everywhere,
E'en if the eye the swarming purlieus scan,
Twilight bequeaths its purple peace for boon;
See, in the corner of yon squalid square,
Where nimble elves, of rags and dirt and tan,
Dance gleeful to some hurdy-gurdy tune!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



PERSONAL PRECAUTION

GERALDINE—At what hour will you call to-morrow night?
GERALD—What time is it your father's feet get to sleep?



TWO STANDPOINTS

QUOTH Youth, "What is this heaven whither, it is said, we go?"
A wise man answered, "Heaven is a place where we shall *know*."

Quoth Youth, "What is this heaven whither, all men say, we move?"
A woman answered, "Heaven is a place where we shall *love*!"

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.

MRS. MACK'S EXAMPLE

By Flora Bigelow Dodge

SCENE—*The Eltons' drawing-room, tasteful and comfortable, and decorated with handsome bric-à-brac, bronze and old hangings. An open fire, tea table, divan and easy-chairs.*

MRS. ELTON (*twenty-five, pretty, Southerner, socially ambitious, pouring tea*)—Billy, I think it is high time we gave a ball, to make just a little splurge. You always say "Go easy," and we live simply, even if well, so nobody knows how rich we are. I don't mean a ball with orchids and pearl necklaces for cottillion favors, or horses—fancy taking home a Shetland pony in your cab! You see, we are right in the smart set, only we don't know anybody well, and there are three or four English people I want to get to know. I could ask them to a ball, but not to dinner. It would look pushing—and I do want to take a house in London next season.

MR. ELTON (*about forty, of genial expression, formerly a miner in the West*)—That's right. In society you can't push—just shove.

MRS. ELTON—Don't be unsympathetic, Billy. You know we have done very well here, and as for London, I assure you, honey, I could engineer a campaign there as well as anybody. Look at Mrs. Mack; she says she knows everybody and goes everywhere, and always talks of "Gladys This" and "Ivy That" and "Lily the Other." In English names run so to growing things. Did you ever notice that?

MR. ELTON (*smiling*)—She may go everywhere, but I doubt if she is

asked everywhere. Anyway, Dolly, you can't compete with the Macks; they're as rich as mud. I expect even the child's teeth are filled with diamonds—gold's too cheap for the Macks. He used to be a fine man once, before he took root in Wall street, and now—well, my dear, I wasn't born a robber. I *earned* my money.

MRS. ELTON (*sipping her tea*)—I know, Billy; everyone says you're straight as possible in business, and I wouldn't have you different in any way (*pats him affectionately*), even if I can never wear entire lace underclothes like Mrs. Mack.

MR. ELTON—That's what makes her so nervous, I guess. Golly! how that lace must scratch and tickle! Last Summer, when I saw that child at Newport walking its little match legs off with that potato-faced German Fräulein—poor little kid, ruffled like a lamp-shade, hot and uncomfortable—I felt sorry for her. Poverty has some advantages, and I thought of my childhood—how I used to run around without shoes or stockings in Blurr Heights, pulling a soap box nailed on wheels, roasting potatoes and apples in the woods and eating them, peelings, core and all—that was fun for a young one. All the nourishment of apples and potatoes is in the peelings.

MRS. ELTON—Yes, dear, I'm sure you are right—you don't mind my speaking of it, dear?—I know what an angel you are, because I've been married to you three years, and how you try to do everything for my happiness and position, but please don't talk so much about those old days when you nour-

ished yourself with peelings and wore no shoes—you know what I mean. People don't quite know what to make of you; they don't understand and get embarrassed—a lot of people that aren't nearly as nice and as good as you are. You don't mind, dear, my telling you, do you?

MR. ELTON—Well, it's damn ungrateful of them not to understand, when I work and slave to please them, bore myself to death, eat what I don't like, wear collars that hurt my neck and choke me, pick out all the stupidest women in the room to talk to—or rather you pick them out for me and I carry the list in my pocket and take a peek at it every now and then when nobody's looking. I'm a business man, I understand the game—buy a cheap stock because it may rise. We try to be polite to people before they are too smart, because we don't know but they may be smart some day, and we talk to the people who are already smart because we want to be one of them. (*Begins to smoke.*) I understand it all, and I'm getting well trained. I can walk past the loveliest girl in a ballroom now without changing my gait or heaving a sigh, and steer straight for some sleepy old cat tottering under a dusty tiara and who ought to be home in bed—and all just because she has a big house and entertains well. (*Sighs.*) Sometimes I miss my little jokes with a few old friends, but then you are fun, Dolly—when I get you all to myself, once or twice a year—and *you* know the point of a joke without having to sit on it, eh?

MRS. ELTON—Well, I hope so. It's only until we are safely started, dear, that we have to cater to all the important people, and sometimes bore ourselves. The time will come, I suppose, when we shall have our position secure, and not have to scratch and claw to hang on to the social perch, but just sit up and swing our heels and enjoy ourselves. There must be *some* people somewhere who enjoy society and aren't half-dead with just the slavery of it, but society in New York is so capricious and

changeable one has to keep up or else drop out and be nobody.

MR. ELTON—"Hang on" about expresses it. But what do you want of those English? I don't care for Englishmen. There's a casual impudence about them I can't endure, and they're ungrateful and patronizing. I had one experience to cure me of the appetite—

MRS. ELTON—Don't be unjust, Billy. There are two or three very smart women over here and a Sir Somebody—I don't know if I should call him by his front or his hind name—anyway, I forget both for the moment, and a Lord—Lord—Thrum. Such a good-looking man—he's so clean I'm sure he smells of soap—and beautifully dressed always, and his hair looks so smart, parted on one side and then sort of brushed back suddenly from his forehead—why can't you learn to do yours like that?—you look like a Methodist parson, the way it is parted in the middle and plastered down each side. (*She tries to rumple it.*)

MR. ELTON—Stop that nonsense. Well, what do you want of Lord Soap-and-Water?

MRS. ELTON—It would be very nice to have those few English people come to our ball—no, not ball, just a little dinner dance—then they would call on us, and then we would ask them to some little informal thing—particularly the Lord. Titles are a great comfort in England to an unknown American—and then he would ask us to let him know when we came to London.

MR. ELTON—Don't you believe it. I know the English élite—had a sample copy once. You'd better not feed him until you have it all down in writing—what he'll do for you over there. There is something about an ocean voyage that changes us Americans so that when we arrive in England they don't often seem to be able to recognize us again. (*Winks.*) Besides, over there manners don't count. A man gets invited around just because he's alive, and Englishmen aren't unselfish, like we are. Catch

them boring themselves to talk to people to please their wives, as we do! Some years ago I saw a good deal of the remains of an old London beau in New York, and gave him pretty nearly every square meal he had, too, I guess. When I went to London and left my card on him, bless my heart, he paid no more attention to it than if it had been an advertisement. I met him later at the races, and, of course, he didn't recognize me—they never do! Well, I spoke to him, and he answered me in a far-off, dreamy way, as if he were calling up the ghost of his dead grandmother; had no idea who I was, probably thought he'd seen me punching cattle out West somewhere—so I just lost him in the crowd as quick as I could, "cause there wasn't nothin' else to do."

MRS. ELTON—But you're a man, Billy—

MR. ELTON—I was brought up to think so.

MRS. ELTON—And that's different from a woman—

MR. ELTON—Thank God for the variety of sex.

MRS. ELTON—Ah, Billy, don't be aggravating—you know what I mean. They like American women better than American men, perhaps.

MR. ELTON—I like *any* women better than men. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. ELTON—Promise me, then, I may have my dinner dance and ask *anybody* I like, you darling.

MR. ELTON—Yes, yes, yes, do as you please, and send the bills to me; I'll pay them if I can. I certainly never saw anyone enjoy spending money as much as you do. I also never saw anyone practice such self-denial as you do with it all, starving yourself to be thin—though you and the Lord seem to have disagreed on the design of your original shape. You pick out the dullest people to entertain, without ringing any changes, and you call that sort of thing "society." What a life, what a life! Why, when I worked at seventy-five cents a day I never worked as hard as you do, for at least when I was tired I sat down to eat

my hunk of bread and cheese with some man I liked (*Mrs. Elton makes a grimace*), but you—why, you never see Susie Smiley any more, whom you were so fond of in the old days, you have no time to rest, and you can't even eat a meal with someone that interests you, you're so afraid of missing something. But then, of course, I'm a man, as you suggested a moment ago—"I am discovered," as the Indian said to Christopher Columbus.

MRS. ELTON (*laughing*)—You are very clever in your way. You are a self-made man, and self-made men are the backbone of our country, but one can't live on backbones alone. I appreciate it all and I am devoted to you, but I acknowledge I am ambitious, and I love everything worldly, and society and position and polish—

MR. ELTON—Don't let too much polish blind your little eyes with its lustre, Dolly—it's dangerous.

MRS. ELTON—Billy dear, I will be careful, of course. People have been so good to me it took me nearly a year to lose all my old friends, and then in two years I have made all my new ones, but that isn't as hard as losing people one has once known. They always turn up unexpectedly and look frumpy. Of course, you are a mining king and supposed to be much richer than you are, and I am a first family of Virginia, born and brought up on a ham farm, and people have helped us get on—

MR. ELTON—Don't make any mistake there, Dolly. In life we succeed *in spite* of people, never *because* of them. Now I'm going out. I have to meet a man at the Union Club on business. Try to spend a little more time with our child before you dress for dinner in the evenings. Blood is stronger than water, and each rivet you put in his little heart now will bind him closer to you in after life. (*Kisses her and goes out.*)

MRS. ELTON (*walking over to the sofa and lying down*)—There must be something very wicked about me. I don't like people to be *too* honest and natural—there seems a sort of mental indecency about it. Lord Thrum

would be nice to me in London, I know; he has talked to me a good deal about it and begged me to come over next Summer. He advised me to leave Billy and the baby behind, and come over alone. He says all American women come over without husbands—that's why they come, whatever he means by that. He says it's conspicuous to go about too much with one's own husband abroad. Billy is so good he never looks at another woman, and can't understand why I want to see other men. I have heard all his little jokes and mining experiences now three times, having been married three years, and he has just about three hundred and sixty-five different ones to repeat. He doesn't read anything except newspapers, and cares for no kind of sport—although when we go to spend Sundays in the country now he attempts to ride and do things with other men, and by evening is in such a state of collapse he nearly snores at dinner and is stiff for two days afterward. I suppose men who don't exercise regularly get more tired. He never moves during the week if he can help it, except in a cable car, and when we are in town Sundays the one thing he enjoys is parading with me on Fifth Avenue in his top-hat and frock coat, which is always a shade tight, and seeing our friends' servants out airing themselves and "keeping company." He always insists on alluding to his mining days on every possible occasion, and I know people don't like it, and when people put on a few harmless airs he jumps on them with all fours. I remember the other day we were dining with the Macks. Mr. Mack used to be a great friend of Billy's before he took to playing polo on Long Island—that was just the last straw, and Billy can't stand him any more, or his wife. I try to keep in with them—I don't dislike her, and most people like her, and she goes everywhere. Mrs. Mack said to Billy at dinner that her husband had cut his hand so badly with a knife, sharpening a pencil, that she was afraid of blood

poisoning, and Billy said, very loud, "Strange your husband should have grown so clumsy with a knife; he used to eat with it all right enough in the old days and never cut his mouth." She was furious, and shrieked, "Sir, I don't know what you mean!" and he muttered something under his breath and broke out in trickles of emotion, pulling down his vest savagely every few moments, as he always does when he is irritated. I let my fan slip off my lap, and distracted the men on either side of me by making them find it—that's why I like satin dresses, things slip off easily, and when Billy mortifies me I find it the greatest comfort. But he's a great man in his way. I know that, and I do appreciate him. I wish, though, I was more domesticated. He's perfectly crazy about the baby, and I only like it; it bores me to play with it, and those wet kisses it gives me (*rubs her cheek*) give me the creeps instead of the maternal flutter one reads about in books. I'm just a thoroughly worldly woman, and have no illusions about the fact. I go and sit in the nursery and shake a rattle, with my eyes glued on the clock, wondering how soon I can get away, and nurse gives me reproachful looks all the time, and she wonders that I don't want it brought down to the parlor to show the "gentlemen callers." After all, it isn't their baby; why should I? Oh, I must be an unnatural woman (*jumps up and walks slowly to the door*), but I must live my life just the same and snatch the little scraps of happiness where I find them. Happiness isn't growing on every bush. Well, I must go up stairs for a little while now and say to myself "motherhood, motherhood, motherhood," over and over again, and try to cultivate the proper feelings.

Servant knocks and announces Mrs. Mack.

Mrs. Mack enters; about forty, dressed in very flashy white, jewels, ermine, followed by a small dog with a bracelet collar, little fancy coat and a big bow on his neck.

MRS. MACK (*embracing Mrs. Elton*)
—Well, my dear, how are you? I hope

you don't mind my bringing Duke of York in to you for his fit. I was taking him for a little walk up Madison avenue, and he showed his unmistakable symptoms—he has fits so often in this first warm weather. It is really rather a trial for me, and I hate him to grovel and roll on the hard, dirty paving stones—it must be so uncomfortable for him. I brought the poor dear in here so he could have his fit on your carpet. Perhaps you will let me shut him up in your dressing-room. He is foaming slightly at the mouth already, and his eyes look worried—a sure sign—and in about three minutes more he will be really bad, poor dear. (*Lifts him and pats him.*) Can I go right up to your dressing-room? I know him so well, poor baby! (*Moves toward door across the room.*)

MRS. ELTON — Certainly (*makes grimace*), if the carpet is good enough for him there. I suppose you have a special room fitted for him at home.

MRS. MACK—Bless his heart, I have, indeed—a hall bedroom with his sleeping basket at one end, and the wall paper covered with birds—he loves so to chase the little birds in the Summer time—and then I have a long mirror so that he can look at himself and fancy he has a friend, and not feel lonely.

MRS. ELTON—Ah, I see; we often think we see a friend in life, and are mistaken. The whole room seems to be designed for optical illusions, doesn't it? Come this way. (*Opens door and lets Mrs. Mack pass.*) You know the way and can just drop him in my dressing-room while I prepare some fresh tea for you, and we can have a little chat and nourishment while the Duke of York is indulging his fancy in the other room. (*Mrs. Mack laughs. Exit.*)

MRS. ELTON (*walking back to the tea table and preparing tea*)—What a funny world! She's simply crazy about that odious little beast. I would poison it and use it for a pen-wiper. I can't stand any very loving animal, but I'm glad she came. I'll talk to her about Paris and London,

as she goes over every year and gets some ideas. I fancy she knows heaps of people, though as she frowns so on immorality of every kind, and calls her house a social sieve, I don't see how she finds a friend. Billy, though he hates her, says she is a model of virtue, and always will be as long as she keeps that face! (*Laughs to herself.*) She told me the only thing that induced her to go abroad and leave her husband here was to be near her son, who was studying architecture in Paris, and she wanted him to have a pure home to come to and not be straying around with the Latins in the quarter he was living in. (*Laughs again.*) And her daughter she takes to England every year for her complexion, which is being improved by the fogs of London—and I can't blame her for being grateful to England for that, for it's a big job to expect of any fog. Good heavens! (*raises her arms*) but I hear her coming! (*Aloud.*) I hope your anxiety has not taken away your thirst for tea. One lump? (*Holds up sugar tongs and cup.*)

MRS. MACK (*seating herself and spreading out her clothes carefully*)—Yes, please. The Duke of York was just stiffening himself when I left him. I will let him stay there for about fifteen minutes and then take him home. I knew you wouldn't mind, Dolly, my taking your silk comforter for him to lie on; I spread it out on the floor for him. The Brussels carpet isn't as soft as mine. Those comfortables are the most useful things in the world, I do declare—they can be used over or under.

MRS. ELTON (*making a face again*)—Oh, certainly—I mean not at all. Perhaps you would like me to lend him my sable cape, so he could chew the tails while he's feeling nervous.

MRS. MACK—Ha, ha! I do wonder if you aren't laughing at me. Don't let yourself grow too humorous, above all things. Nothing ages a woman so much—

MRS. ELTON—Is that the secret of your eternal youth?

MRS. MACK—I expect so. I don't laugh much; in fact, I don't see much to laugh at. (*Mrs. Elton tries not to be observed smiling.*) I sometimes see little jokes, but seldom find it worth while to disturb my face with them; it just gives you lines and wrinkles if you do. You must acknowledge, my dear, that for the mother of four big children, I do look fresh.

MRS. ELTON—You are, indeed.

MRS. MACK—A clear conscience and a contented disposition go a long way, my dear. Then, of course, I have every luxury—more, of course, than most of my friends can afford.

MRS. ELTON—Your skin is lovely, and your figure, too. I hear people are crazy about you abroad.

MRS. MACK—Nonsense! Who told you such stuff? (*cooly*).

MRS. ELTON—I can't just think who at the moment. Oh, I'll think up somebody directly.

MRS. MACK—You flatter, you flatter, I know. Well, I'll tell you. (*Drinks her tea and sets down cup.*) I bathe in cold water every morning, after throwing in a pound of orris root powder. Then I am massaged for an hour, which makes me feel too divine; then the manicure comes to do my fingers and toes, then the Christian Science woman comes to give me mental treatment, and by half-past twelve I am ready and dressed to go out and take a drive. My metaphysician is really wonderful, though, of course, very expensive, but I go on the theory that anything that one really *wants* is cheap, no matter what it costs. In the first place, she fixes one's ideas in one's head so that one never believes anything disagreeable about one's self; it's just considered error. Now, instead of being worried about other people's troubles and illnesses, as I used to be, I feel it is their own fault, that they aren't properly adjusted mentally, and then don't give them another thought. One has to close one's eyes to so much in life to be happy—you know what the Bible says about charity. Oh, my dear,

Christian Science is *the* great discovery of the century. It has done so much for me, and is a most comforting belief. My husband has a wonderful nature naturally, and doesn't need it. It cuts me to the quick to leave him every Summer, and you don't know the many lonely hours I spend in Paris for the sake of my children. When the little ones are sleeping I take out his dear letters and read them over and over, dropping a loving tear here and there, as I sit in the great ballroom, surrounded by those indecent decorations the French insist on putting in the houses of all rich Americans; but I feel I must sacrifice my husband for my children. I think all true American women feel that way. Don't you? Children must be considered first. They didn't ask to come into the world, after all.

MRS. ELTON—Well, I don't quite know—

MRS. MACK—And one's husband knows what he's doing when he picks out a wife—

MRS. ELTON—I wonder (*reflectively*) . . . But why don't you take Mr. Mack abroad with you?

MRS. MACK—Really, my dear, what a silly question to ask, if you'll forgive my saying so. In the first place, what does *anybody* go to Paris for? *Clothes*. Well, he can get good enough clothes ready made here in New York. Next there is the language some people go for, but that, again, one can study in America just as well, though it costs a little more, I grant you. Of course, one hears of a few people in our class of life who go to see the sights and galleries, but very, very few. (*Shakes her head slowly.*) Personally I hate sightseeing, and have never yet ever taken the trouble to drive out to the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

MRS. ELTON (*surprisedly*)—A rather long drive, wouldn't it be?

MRS. MACK—I don't really know how far it is. I just said I never had been there. Then people have been so kind to me, the old nobility particularly. They save me every little

care and trouble in my few simple entertainments by asking the guests for me. I hardly give it all a thought; in fact, often don't know who's coming, and to tell you the truth, don't know half of them when they get there. I don't mind paying the bills if others will do the work. I love so to give a little pleasure in this weary world. (*Sighs.*) You see, my husband's chief pleasure is in his business and seeing his wife and children happy. He is such a good man! He is very ambitious for my eldest daughter, Matilda; she is the greatest heiress in the world now, and I would like her to accomplish some position—do something, you know, that no American has ever done before.

MRS. ELTON—You should have thought of that before she was born—one has to get up pretty early in the morning to get ahead of everything American women have accomplished, so far, in the world. I fear she is a little late.

MRS. MACK—I know, Americans have done so much in a social way, but none has yet been—I hate to say it—(*leans over and whispers loudly*) a queen!

MRS. ELTON—That is true; but where do you see any sign out, "Kings for Sale?"

MRS. MACK—Well, my dear, the *on dit* is that lovely Queen Alexandra is far from well. However, that is neither here nor there. By the way, your husband told me, somewhere, the other night, that *you* were thinking of coming abroad. Oh, my dear, be careful; you are young, pretty and susceptible to bold eyes and dashing words, and would so easily get your head turned; I tremble for your future. The morals, I must acknowledge, are the only drawback to the Old World. They are—well—very elastic, I think, describes them fairly well. Many of the women who appear ladies have—oh! the word chokes me, but I must be truthful—have *lovers*! I try to keep my eyes closed to all the disagreeables of life, but one can't help hearing things here and there that are shocking and

sad. I feel it my duty, with my family and position and wealth, to spread my wings a little and not keep all in one continent, you understand; but with you it is different. There is *no* excuse for you to leave *your* loving husband. Oh, the home-sickness *I* suffer! But one can't always think of enjoyment if one has worldly ambitions, can one?

MRS. ELTON (*sighing*)—No, indeed; I guess not.

MRS. MACK (*rising*)—I must go to see about my little dog now. He must have finished. It was too kind of you to insist (*Mrs. Elton opens her eyes very wide*) on my bringing him to your room. Just like you, though—always so generous and impulsive and original. (*Goes toward door.*) You must tell me all about your ball. I hear rumors about it. Are you really going to give one? Do you think you know quite enough people? I expect you do, if you only attempt a dinner dance, but be sure you ask even the people you don't want, only send the invitations to the wrong addresses; then they get them too late to come, or not at all, and you can always say, with a clear conscience, that you *have asked* them, and make no enemies. That is the secret of my success, I have no enemies; I am just the same to everyone, always polite and smiling, no matter what I think—in fact, I have rather got out of the way of thinking at all. There is no use having opinions; you only irritate people and make lines in your face. I can be of assistance to you in seating the people at dinner, for I keep a short list of all the people who are on speaking terms in New York—and very short it is, too—and then branch lists of the few different small sets. It takes too much memory, with all the divorces and feuds going on, to carry it all in my head, and there is, on the other hand, nothing people hate so much as meeting new people out and being planted next them at table.

MRS. ELTON—Yes, indeed, I know, and I would be very grateful to you for any help, as you have

entertained so much. (*Exit Mrs. Mack.*)

MRS. ELTON (*rising and pluming herself in front of the glass*)—Oh, I really *would* like to see a little of that wicked life abroad. I am younger than Mrs. Mack and believe I have more brains, though *that* fact needn't turn my head. Perhaps I would try having a best young man, too, if I could catch him on the rebound from someone, and altogether I would learn a lot spending a few weeks in Paris and then in London. I must say, though, I would like to see something besides clothes in Paris. I wish I could meet some clever people, the sort of political people you read of, people who do things—I hear they're fashionable abroad. I want so to cultivate myself; now there is no reason why I shouldn't know a little about bric-à-brac and pictures and china and furniture and stuffs—I don't know anything about anything, in the first place, and least of all about the value of all these priceless hideosities Billy buys all the time for this house—metal figures with green mildew on 'em, candlesticks we can't use, chairs that if sat on one would fall through, and endless hangings full of holes and patches and darns, that cost like fun—but I *will* know some day, I'll know it all. How I should enjoy (*moves from the glass and sits by the fire again*) looking around some of these New York drawing-rooms and saying: "That's a lovely table, a copy of an old one I saw in Paris. Oh, did you think it was the *original*? You must have been fearfully cheated on it!" or else, "What a *charming* chair, though the legs are Empire and the back is Renaissance; but most people are so ignorant, don't give it another thought; I sha'n't tell!"

MRS. MACK (*returning with her dog*)—Isn't he the cutest, cunningest thing you ever saw?—*so* clever! Would you believe it, he has scratched out and chewed up every button out of your tufted chintz armchair. Wasn't that clever of him? I assure you (*Mrs. Elton looks rather startled but amiable*) he has the intelligence of a living per-

son. You never know what he is going to do next—he is so human! (*To the dog*) You cunnin' 'ittle sing—did 'oo want to punish mother for leavin' 'oo so long alone? Oh, you sweetums! (*Squeezes him hard several times.*) Dolly, dear, we must arrange some charities together soon. I love to go to read to the helpless in places where they can't get away—that sounds queer, but you know what I mean. I always try not to forget the poor, with all my blessings. But I draw the line at the Home for the Incurables. I am one of the managers there, and last Spring, one day when inspecting, they insisted on my going up to the imbecile department, which seemed to me *quite unnecessary*, and a small man with a large head pounced at me and *nearly* kissed me. Fancy how I felt—!

MRS. ELTON—Not flattered, I imagine—as long as it was only an idiot. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. MACK (*annoyed*)—I'm glad you are so amused. I don't think it funny at all, and I resigned from the Board that week.

MRS. ELTON—Forgive my laughing. It *was* perfectly awful. Tell me, to go out in Paris does one need to know a lot? I fancy not, but would I get on better if I bought up some back numbers of the political magazines? What do *you* talk about?

MRS. MACK—You know I have a perfect horror of intellectual women. I think man likes a vacuum—just pretty clothes and sweet manners will get any woman surrounded anywhere. I don't mean I'm really ignorant, but I know all I want to know, a few dates and facts and what's what. No man wants to hear a woman talk politics or history. I remember sitting next to a great French statesman once, I forget whom, now—there are so many of them one meets—and he said something about the war between the North and the South, which of course everyone knows about, and I said I thought too much fuss had been made about it altogether, and that our generals

were not as good then as now, for the simplest thing to have done, of course, would have been to put the army at the Isthmus of Panama and keep the Southerners from marching up. He looked at me for a moment, and then leaned over and said, "*Mais vous êtes charmante,*" and changed the conversation at once to my jewels. I wore some simple souvenir that Napoleon gave Marie Antoinette when they were engaged, which she sold when she got so hard up in later years and went to live in England—I have so much sentiment about all those little things, and always like to know the history of each precious stone I own; it makes them twice as valuable to me. The point of my telling you all this, Dolly, about the French statesman—

MRS. ELTON—Yes, do tell me the point.

MRS. MACK—Is to show how little clever men care to talk with women about those deep kind of things. They prefer trivialities, and save all the deep thoughts for their conversations with other men. I really must go now. I have been here so long. Let me see, I'm sure I've forgotten to say something to you. I particularly wanted to— (*Opens, closes and reopens the door.*) Well, anyway, I must go. Good-bye. (*Exit.*)

MRS. ELTON (*closing door after her*)—Good-bye. (*Looks at clock.*) Half-past six! Dear me, how late it is, and I haven't been up to see the baby yet, and I want to rest and dress and answer three or four invitations. Such a rush as one lives in! What a woman!—just lacking a little in everything except money. I must run up stairs before Billy gets back—simply fly.

Enter Mr. Elton.

MR. ELTON—Well, Dolly, I just met Mrs. Mack going out. Did you enjoy her? (*Picks a bit of cake off the tea table and eats it.*) One oughtn't to eat this sort of stuff—it's so bad for one's plumbing organs. (*Walks back to Mrs. Elton.*) By the way, your friend Lord Thrum was put up at the Pantaloon Club to-day, where I

had a little chat with him. He seems much nicer than most of the men they export from England. I took rather a fancy to him myself, which annoyed me, as I hadn't meant to. I don't like the race. He asked about you and said you were the nicest woman in this country. He's got good taste, anyway. I was able to do him a good turn to-day, and he seemed very grateful. It sounds unnatural to say an Englishman is grateful, but he certainly was. It didn't hurt me, and I was able to help him. I guess he's hard up. He seems to have a whole bunch of unmarried sisters holding the fort at home. Funny how that damp climate seems to breed females in such large quantities. He likes music so much that he goes all by himself and sits in the gallery every night to listen to those everlasting mouldy operas we have known all our lives—over and over again, mind you, all by himself; at least that's what he says. He don't look to me to have enough memory to be a liar. Well, music to him must be like grass to a cow. I never saw such a strange man—simple as a child. Everything went to size in his composition, it seems. He would have lost a good deal of money but for something I told him, and I would have made it. It's a funny world.

MRS. ELTON—Billy, you are so nice. Did he really like me, do you think?

MR. ELTON—I don't know if you were interfering with his appetite or sleep, but he evidently thought you worth wasting some breath on. He said you were most original—"witty" I think is the word he used.

MRS. ELTON (*bridling with pleasure*)—Let's come up together and play with the baby a little while before we dress for dinner, and Billy, you are such a dear to let me have my dinner dance. I was telling Mrs. Mack about it. Now I don't care much if I don't get a tiara for my birthday. (*Slips her arm through his.*) Come on up stairs and tell me what else Lord Thrum said about me.

Exeunt.

II

Mrs. Elton's bedroom two months later. Mrs. Elton in bed, resting after a ball. Breakfast tray, newspaper. Room very dainty, pink and white. Maid taking away dress.

MRS. ELTON (*yawning*)—Marie, my dress is torn to ribbons; I don't believe I can ever wear it again. Will you please go down and see the cook for me, find out what is left over and order for the servants? I am out to everything. I am too tired this morning to talk food, particularly after that late supper at 4.30. To think of me sleeping until eleven! Order the brougham at one o'clock. (*Exit Marie.*) Let's see what's in this awful paper: "Blown Up by an Oil Tank," "Divorced Because of Snoring," "Latest Style of Pants for Millionaires," "What the Average Banker Eats for Breakfast," "Mrs. Van Pond's Ball—The Smartest Ball of the Year—Poultry and Pearl Pins for Favors." Yes, there's my name; oh, I am glad. That is the crowning success of my ambition; now I can go everywhere, and everybody knows it. (*Reads to herself.*) Dear me, I had no idea ducks were so expensive. How much that ball must have cost! It is vulgar having all the price of it in the paper, though. (*Telephone rings at the head of her bed.*) Hello! . . . You don't mean it! . . . I'm crazy about him; of course, I'd give my head to go. . . . What? . . . Oh, just a little, simple dress, but there is nothing left of it now. . . . Not so loud, please; you tickle my ear so I can't hear. . . . Yes. . . . Well, she ought to be well spanked—the idea of such a thing! . . . Good-bye. (*Puts down telephone.*) It's enough to drive a woman crazy—this life. Really, I'm reduced to a pulp, and if I wasn't sure of going abroad inside of two weeks I'd take an overdose of something, just because I'm too tired to work at enjoyment any more. Oh, the stupid men I have to talk to

(*pushes away paper*)—the hot air I have to breathe night after night! The ballrooms are hot enough to give one freckles. Now that I go everywhere, and know everybody, I don't want to know them any better; I long to get away and see something different—any old thing or place. To rest and sleep at sea—it seems too good to be true. I must take another look at my tickets. (*Takes them from under her pillow.*) They make it all seem more real to me. Lord Thrum sailed last week only, but it seems a month since he left. He has promised to meet me in Paris with his sister—I don't know which—I hope not all of his sisters. Then perhaps I'll go to England. I should love to see a house party, after reading "The Visits of Elizabeth." I shall come home with a fringe and a bun, and an English accent, and try to lose my hips in the London fog—and I hope never to find them again. How strange life is! Two months ago I thought if I was allowed to give a dance I should be absolutely happy. Well, now, that idea's worn off. Then I thought if I could only get an invitation to the Lewises' swimming party—given in their aquatic ballroom—which was the most original ball ever given here, and people were all just dying to go, I thought my cup of pleasure would be filled. Well, I was asked and went. I swam the cotillion with Lord Thrum—whom I never can admire as much since I have seen him in a bathing suit—caught an awful cold and have felt malarious ever since, and now I am cross and restless and feel all my happiness is staked on my trip abroad. Happiness always seems just out of reach, no matter how we struggle to attain it—I sometimes wonder now if we turned our back on it whether it would follow us. It seems to me I read that idea in some magazine. Two more weeks only, then I skip off alone with my maid for my first glimpse of Paris and London. (*Loud knock at the door.*) Billy, I know that's your knock; come in. (*Mr.*

Elton enters and kisses her.) Good morning. How does it happen you remained up town so late?

MR. ELTON (*seating himself on the side of the bed*)—I have a business engagement here at twelve to-day and also some things to talk over with you. Mr. Mack says you must go to stop with his wife in Paris. Her letters sound so lonely and sad, and he wants you to give her a perfect surprise—not let her suspect you are even coming first to Paris—just suddenly arrive there from the steamer. He says she wrote him that she thought of begging you to come and spend a few weeks with her there, only she was afraid you would be bored, as she lives so quietly the greater part of the time and she was afraid you would miss the constant society of men that you were used to at home.

MRS. ELTON—Oh, the old cat!

MR. ELTON—I told him I would use all my influence to try to persuade you to accept her offer, as I much prefer feeling that you are going straight to friends first than to have you wandering around in strange hotels in a strange city. Of course I don't care for Mrs. Mack myself for a steady diet, but she and you always get on. After all, she's a harmless thing, and kind and good as possible. (*Telephone rings.*)

MRS. ELTON—You answer, dear. I nearly fell out of bed doing it a moment ago.

MR. ELTON (*obeying, listens*)—Mrs. Van Pond wants to know if she can meet the German Ambassador here at your house at four to-day on account of the blizzard—I don't see the connection. He—the German—goes back to Washington at six.

MRS. ELTON—Of course; tell her to come to tea at four—that I will go out driving. Just tell her what I said.

MR. ELTON—Of course; come to tea at four; am out driving. (*Hangs up telephone.*) I don't want to be unsympathetic, but that seems to me rather an extraordinary request.

MRS. ELTON—Oh, my dear, not at

all. Van Pond is a perfect beast. He never allows the furnace lighted because it isn't healthy, and that front parlor is cold enough to freeze a polar bear. He is most trying and has a mania for hygiene—he eats nuts instead of meats. No wonder he has bushy whiskers; it is a wonder to me he doesn't grow a tail with such a diet. He is one of the old families, with a pond in the suburbs named after him. All old families in America are petered out and are unhealthy and queer. I tell you the *nouveaux riches* are the people of the day. He makes that poor little delicate woman sleep with her windows open all kinds of weather, and the two sickly babies take their naps in the back yard tied to the clothes pole—I mean the baby carriages are, not the babies. The discomfort of that whole house is beyond belief. Horsehair furniture like his grandmother used, everywhere—he's so awfully proud to have had one rich enough to own furniture; and he always makes her wear brown ribbons in her underclothes, as he says pinks and blues are associated with fast women and not ladylike. She always comes here cold days to keep warm, and I feed her up and give her French novels to keep up her spirits and let her see *some* people have fun, anyway. (*Knock at the door.*) Come in! (*Enter maid with note. Reading.*) Tell Mrs. Coddle I shall be delighted to drive with her this afternoon. She only wants a verbal answer. (*Telephone rings again.*)

MR. ELTON—I don't see that these restful mornings in bed are what they're cracked up to be, what with your telephone and notes and orders and visitors—

MRS. ELTON—I long to swear. (*Takes up telephone.*) Thank you so much! I'm awfully sorry, but I'm lunching out and dining out every day until I sail. . . . No, can't possibly give you a meal—I mean take a meal. (*Laughs.*) So sorry. Good-bye.

MR. ELTON (*rising*)—Well, Dolly dear, can I tell Mr. Mack, then, that you will stop with his wife in Paris

and surprise her, as he asks? I shall see him this afternoon. He seems really worried about her low spirits and would be relieved to know you were going to be with her, and the surprise would please her and do her a lot of good, he thinks, and he ought to know. Your gaiety and spirits would brighten her up.

MRS. ELTON—All right, Billy. Of course I will, if you want me to. (*Knock at the door.*) What is it?

BUTLER (*from outside*)—Madam, can you see Mrs. Lee?

MRS. ELTON—No, certainly *not*. She never goes when she comes. Tell her I'm sorry, but I'm just taking my bath, and I know I would keep her too long before I could get dressed, and anyway, I'm rushing out to a lesson. (*Butler retreats.*) Really, Billy, one *has* to tell little fibs. She comes and talks and talks about her troubles and worries and her husband's neglect, and the more I know her the more I feel sympathy for him, but she always looks crestfallen, and so she gets all the sympathy; and he always looks chipper, and so everybody says he has no heart and is a brute. The world never gives anyone credit for courage or self-control. The sympathy is usually given to the people who go about begging for it and bore everyone they come near. I can't stand being complained to for more than a very short term of years, I find. Really, Billy, it does seem as if one were never at peace in New York. Things roaring above us, beside us and around us. Telephones jingling in our ears every moment, knocks and notes. I am so sick of it! Oh! to think I am getting away from it—to go somewhere where I hardly know a soul! It is too, too lovely to think of and look forward to.

MR. ELTON—Well, dear, you used to be discontented because you didn't know people and get invitations, and now you have too many. You will get your life balanced some day, and have just enough, perhaps. You see you are so attractive everybody wants you that knows you.

MRS. ELTON—I love to hear you

say nice things to me, Billy. I feel somehow, though, that I am not quite as nice lately. I wonder if too much society *really* hurts people. Lord Thrum says it does. I know I'm worldly and would sacrifice a lot for my ends. I frighten myself sometimes.

MR. ELTON (*walking up and down*)—Oh, little girl, your heart's in the right place. That's the main thing. In a crisis I would count on you every time. Perhaps the social bee is buzzing too loud just for the present, but "when the wind blows we can see the skin of the fowl," and if a wind blows yours will be the right color, I guess. Don't forget me and the baby when you go. I'm a rough fellow, I know, but I love you a great deal and only want your happiness. I shall try to spare you three months. Now I'm off. (*Exit.*)

MRS. ELTON (*throwing herself back on the pillows*)—I feel quite sentimental when he talks like that. I'm only nervous and cross and upset about nothing. (*Rings for maid.*) Marie, please darken my room and turn off the telephone from here into the pantry, and don't let anyone disturb me for an hour; I don't wish to be called unless the house is on fire. If any notes come, or callers, tell Walker to say I'm out, or dead, or anything—I don't care what. (*Marie draws shades and darkens room and carries out breakfast tray.*) I'm going to turn over and try to get an hour's sleep before dressing for lunch. Do we sleep to forget, or do we sleep to remember? (*Cuddles up in a heap and pulls covers half over her head.*)

III

The Eltons' sitting-room, seven weeks later. Mr. Elton, smoking in front of the fire, his throat bandaged up. Flowers everywhere. Baby's rocking-horse and rag doll lying on the floor.

MR. ELTON (*poking the fire*)—How dull the days seem when I am locked up alone with a sore throat and weak eyes and low spirits generally! Noth-

ing seems to go well with Dolly away. The cooking has deteriorated steadily and Walker has taken to hitting the bottle. I miss the notes and the noise and the bell and the telephone going all day and hearing her gay laugh. She was always so full of fun and spirits. Her letter is just like her, too. It seems as if she had been gone a year, though in reality it's only five weeks, and she is due to arrive to-day. One cable saying she had arrived in Paris, one nice, long letter from there and one cable saying she was sailing for home are all the news I've had of her—not a very lively correspondence. It makes me mad to think I am only just able to crawl out of bed with this sore throat and that I can't meet her. She should be here pretty soon. Let me see. *(Looks at his watch.)* Well, I suppose fifteen minutes more will bring her to me. I have read her letter so many times I know it by heart, but I'll read it once more to pass the time. *(Takes letter from pocket and reads slowly.)*

DARLING, LONG-SUFFERING, PATIENT
BILLY:

You know I don't like writing much or often, but I have heaps to tell you in as short a space as I can. We had a lovely trip over, although everyone complained about something—I can't think why sea air makes people so discontented. No excitement, except twins born in the steerage. I loved every bit of the voyage and knew nobody, which was a comfort. Now let me tell you about beautiful Paris. First, Mrs. Mack—she comes before Paris—is the biggest humbug without wings in the world. I arrived at her house at 10.15 at night, expecting to find her in tears of homesickness. The butler informed me she was not at home. I told him I had come to stay until she was, as I meant to give her a great treat by surprising her, and I ordered my luggage brought in and sent for the housekeeper and helped myself to the best spare room. The housekeeper said she was off nursing a sick friend. I knew she was lying, for she had that faint, seasick expression people always get who are amateurs in that art. She said she would probably not come back until morning. This time she told the truth. Mrs. Mack came back next

morning. But I don't believe the fairy story about the sick friend. It all looks to me rather like "error!" What do you think? I stayed there three days, but couldn't stand it any more. My heart was so full of evil thoughts about her all the time I was afraid they would break out and make my face ugly. She is very different in Paris, I tell you, from the demure mouse at home. I don't care what people do, but I hate them to pretend so much about virtue. She isn't even a natural fool. *(Mr. Elton laughs.)* Lord Thrum has just come over from London with his youngest sister. She is perfectly lovely, only it is hard to get used to high-necked dresses, without collars, in the street, just cut low about the throat—it makes the face look sort of naked. She wears picture clothes of mussy, soft dresses, with yellow beads and a fringe and a bun. Do you know what those are? One you wear on the bow of your head and the other on the stern. Her voice is too lovely for words. I'm going to talk just like her before I come home, even if I have to undergo a surgical operation to accomplish it. *(He laughs again.)*

Mrs. Mack took us all to a music hall a couple of days ago. I hated it and couldn't understand anything they said and did, though everyone laughed. I asked Lord Thrum to translate the jokes—he was nearly having a fit behind his handkerchief, and he said he didn't understand one word—he only laughed because everyone else laughed. He is the most sympathetic man I ever met. Mrs. Mack has in tow a moth-eaten old marquis with one leg, whom she is quite spoony on, and they make goo-goo eyes at each other all day. Perhaps her husband would feel happier if he knew she was not as lonely as she *used* to be—before she knew the marquis. You can use your own discretion about telling him.

I like this hotel very much and never tire of watching the people walking. The men mostly look tired. The most striking thing about the French women is the lovely petticoats they show a great deal of when walking, and pretty stockings and shoes and dark red lip salve. It is hard to write on about anything without coming back to abuse Mrs. Mack. How I hate her! And I tell you for once and all I have quarreled with her forever. Of course she is jealous of me because an old French marquis with one leg isn't as big a swell

as an English lord with two. In fact, I think just one leg of an English lord as nice as mine—I don't mean my leg, but my Lord Thrum—is worth more than a whole French marquis with three legs. *(He roars with laughter.)* I expect I'm getting silly and excited.

If I write you a long letter like this once every two weeks I'm sure you will be satisfied. I have met two or three Frenchmen, and don't like them. They look at a woman as if they were undressing her with their eyes. By the way, Lord Thrum likes you so much. Do you remember my old friend Totty Coughdrop? She's married a great swell here, only they aren't received anywhere, because he cheats at cards; but as I don't expect to play cards with him I shall go there just the same. I dined with them last night. He seemed quite harmless and told me in very broken English I was very beautiful—that my face was all pure with no sense. He evidently was surprised not to see me look more flattered, and after a few violent words with his wife in French and a great deal of gesticulating and shrugging she explained he meant to tell me my face was without sensuality.

I have been to two or three lunches with people I met at Mrs. Mack's and am seeing everything and doing everything I can to learn. I always believe, when anywhere, do as the anywheres do, and I know you won't scold, no matter what I do to study life in all its phases, because you'll know, whatever happens, I shall always love you best and never deceive you, but I must be a woman of the world at whatever cost.

MR. ELTON *(aside)*—What in thunder does she mean by that? But I could never suspect her of anything that wasn't honest and right. *(Reads on.)*

Write me every mail, because you have more time and no one else to write to but your mother, and I have heaps of people to write to at home, and anyway, less time than you have. Be a good boy. That's why I love you.

Always your devoted

DOLLY.

P. S.—By the way, how is baby? If you can find a dry spot on his face, kiss him for me.

MR. ELTON *(folds letter and kisses it before putting it away in his pocket again)*—Only had my letter a week

when the cable comes saying she's sailing. I can't think what should make her change all her plans and come home so soon. And to think of my not being able to meet her! Ah, how long the minutes are! *(Looks at his watch and walks up and down slowly.)* I have all her favorite flowers about and a box of peanut brittle ready for her in her room. Can't get that abroad, I'll bet. How glad I shall be to fold her in my arms again! *(Tea is brought in.)* I wish I could go and stand at the front door, but the doctor made me promise not to leave this room if he let me up. *(He coughs.)* I hear the bell. By jinks, she's coming! Walker, tell Mrs. Elton I'm not allowed to go out of this room, so can't meet her—and Walker, stop a minute, ask her please to run up stairs. *(He stands at the door listening and waiting.)*

After a few moments Mrs. Elton runs in with arms outstretched. She is dressed very English. Dark blue foulard, écarle net fichu, amber beads, small hat, large frizzes in front and enormous bun behind; long waisted in front and short behind, ultra-French figure. She embraces Mr. Elton and dances around the room with him several times before speaking, then holds him back at arm's length to look at him. Her voice is lower and softer, with decided English accent and rising inflection at the end of each sentence.

MRS. ELTON—Billy, I'm so glad to see you. Look at me. This is the way Lord Thrum's sister always dresses and speaks; don't you like me?

MR. ELTON—My eye! like you? I guess I do! I have so much to ask you I don't know where to begin. What made you come home so suddenly? How did you grow so English in Paris? I always thought people got French styles there. How did you learn all that in five weeks? *(Touches her hair.)* It looks to me as if you had been using a lightning hair restorer, too, Dolly.

MRS. ELTON—Oh, my dear, you can buy them all made up, any size,

any color. I got mine for a medium-sized swelled head. (*Kisses him, and they seat themselves on the sofa, hand in hand.*) The French are wonderful people—they can give you a tonic for the hair warranted to raise hair on your nose, if you drop it while putting it on the scalp. They can squirt stuff into your arms to make them plump, and massage fat off your hips and move it on to your neck; sew in false eyelashes, give Jews piquant noses with a little wax and art—in fact, do anything for looks. But I'm glad to get back, all the same, to you, Billy. You've got me now for keeps. I'll go back even to Blurr Heights with you—*anywhere* you want, and never leave you again—never, never, never! I used to say that the worst woman living was too good for the best man, but I've changed my tune now. (*She pats his hair affectionately.*) How nice the tea looks, but I don't want any tea, I haven't time to get a mouthful—I just want to talk. The room looks so nice. A little disorder always makes a room look homelike, and those lovely flowers—how good of you!

MR. ELTON (*trying to rise, but she holds him down*)—I'll just put that rocking-horse and doll out in the hall. I—

MRS. ELTON—You sha'n't move. I haven't time to spare you that long. Let me tell you something—I'm going to make you the best wife that ever has been known. I'm not going even to drag you out to balls any more when you're tired and want to go to bed.

MR. ELTON—Dolly, I'm so glad you took that trip. Go on. What else?

MRS. ELTON—And I'm not going to flirt any more—in fact, I've had a real Methodist change of heart, but I want to tell you that you owe all this to someone else. It's Lord Thrum that has done it all. I must be honest, Billy—I would like to get on my knees before you—I really ought to.

MR. ELTON—Get on my knees, instead. (*He draws her onto his lap.*)

MRS. ELTON—When I think how

many women lose their homes, children, husbands and friends that aren't a bit worse at heart than I am, only because of curiosity and having come across the wrong man, the ordinary fireside destroyer—then, poor things, they realize it all too late. I, on the contrary, have everything left to me—everything I value most in life. When I think what I have escaped, what a different home-coming I might have had, without all this gladness in my heart—oh, my Billy, will you forgive me for what I might have been? (*Puts her arms about his neck and lays her head against his.*)

MR. ELTON (*sadly*)—I don't quite understand you, my child. Don't be afraid to tell me everything. I think it's always better to tell all or nothing—never just half the truth.

MRS. ELTON—I went abroad to learn things and be fashionable and see life. I heard most women in France were fast and had lovers, and I felt myself drifting into an easy relationship with a man I liked and admired, and I was flattered at being talked about and the knowledge that other women were dying to have him attentive to them—and he wouldn't even look at them, Billy! Oh, that quality is too fascinating for anything to me. He was more than kind, and one evening he came to see me, and it was the first time I ever asked him to come in the evening, and—and—we kissed each other. (*Mr. Elton shivers and lowers his head.*) I knew just what I was doing—just what risks I was running, and did it all deliberately, and meant to go to any lengths to keep him, if I thought that was the way. With the example of the virtuous Mrs. Mack and heaps of other American women abroad I was determined to do just what I saw other fashionable women do. He suddenly pulled himself together after kissing me. I forgot to tell you, Billy, it was Lord Thrum.

MR. ELTON (*softly*)—I thought so.

MRS. ELTON—Well, as I said, he suddenly pulled himself together and took my two hands in his, and looking me straight in the eyes, said: "Mrs.

Elton, I am a man of the world and a gentleman, and I should be ashamed of myself, and I am. I know no woman thanks a man for talking to her in this way, and unless she has a wonderfully fine character resents a man's helping her to protect her honor, and I appeal to your good sense not to misjudge me. I like you so much and respect you so much that I take the risk of losing my friend to prove I am a friend to you and to help you. We are drifting into a very dangerous relationship, and one which, without the ties of home and children, is bound to bring only misery and regret into our lives—particularly to you. Men always get tired of these affairs. At the time they think they won't, and fool themselves and the woman, too, but they do, nevertheless. When two people are married they have other interests in common—their children, their duties, their ambitions and friends; but I believe in life we love people not so much for what they are as what they are capable of. Love lasts through the struggle of both, trying to keep the same ideal. You and I aren't in love with each other. If we were it might last, if we helped each other to do our duty, to lead open, honest lives, but not if I were teaching you to deceive the best of men—a man who has given you everything in his life, who loves you devotedly and whom you really love in your own way. I also am under great obligations to him for a kindness he did me of which you probably know nothing. I am sure you like me, and you know I like you immensely, but I also feel sure that did you not think all this sort of thing was smart, you would be the last woman in the world to indulge in it. You have not, therefore, the excuse of doing wrong for love, or even for passion, for you feel neither. You have example and curiosity. Did I like you less I would not trouble to say all this. I under-

stand you thoroughly, and I want to shield you from the greatest unhappiness that could befall you—with your temperament. You are risking everything to get nothing in return. The man who can only be held by that sort of relationship isn't worth holding. In time I will prove to you my sincere affection for you—of which this is little more than the beginning, and you will learn how much more that is worth than just my momentary caress. I beg of you to go back at once to America, to your husband and child." (*Lowers her head for a moment and sobs, then raises it.*) I remember each word as it was said. I felt so small and flat. It was all so perfectly true, and I forgot my wounded vanity in my shame. I realized suddenly what a silly butterfly I was. He was so gentle and just and kind. It was the first time that I really forgot he was a lord and liked him *for himself*. Oh, Billy, if it only hadn't all been so true! Well, we didn't eat the nice supper spread out, and I cried a little, then he got up and kissed both my hands and went away, and the next morning, which seemed ten weeks later, I sent you a cable, telling you I was sailing the next day. I wrote his sister you had cabled for me. He came to see me off at the steamer and sent me some fruit and flowers. I hope he liked me a little. Of course one never knows, with Englishmen, they are so queer; but now I feel so changed. I appreciate all my blessings so much more. I can't tell you the feeling of sympathy I have for divorced women—for *all* women, for that matter—as if I wanted to take care of them and help them. Probably half the women people now look askance at just drifted along as I did, with no more real wickedness in their hearts than I had, only a different kind of man crossed their path. Oh, Billy, do you love me? (*Raises her head and leans back to look at him.*) I feel I never loved you half so much before.



THE POMPS OF SATAN

By Edgar Saltus

SOMEbody or other, an archbishop, perhaps, declared with obvious regret that a woman gownned in the height of fashion possesses a serenity of mind joined to an elevation of spirit which the consolations of religion are incompetent to provide.

We have not a doubt of it. But in what does fashion consist? Women have been known to state that they would rather be dead than out of it, yet when a definition was sought no adequate description could be obtained. For it is one of the charms of women that in explaining everything they explain nothing. That is quite as it should be. It is for them to exultate and for us to expound. Yet of their clothes we know little. A little is a great deal. But in a matter such as this no mere man may know much. It is even discomfoting to reflect that when the hour comes in which all secrets are revealed Fashion may resolve into Isis still unveiled.

Meanwhile, to the masculine eye at least, the vagaries of it are as recondite as the forecasts of the weather. The mysteries of time and space—mysteries so mysterious that science has reduced them to figments of fancy—are not more enigmatic.

Perhaps, then, it will be safe to say that fashion is an active abstraction—a phrase which does not mean anything, but which sounds very well. In any event, it is a form of debauchery of which the door is closed to man. There are exceptions, however. The deponent has seen six-footers loll about and admire their hunting togs. Yet that is not so ex-

traordinary. In New York urbanity is not more difficult to procure. And there are other instances. There is, for example, the Marquis of Ailesbury, and there is also the Rev. Mr. Sippiwissit, of Boston. The former one day was standing bareheaded in Lincoln & Bennett's, waiting to be waited on. A prelate entered, marched up to him, took his hat off and asked him if he had one like it. The Marquis examined it, handed it back, and with a sweetness which was silken replied, "No, and if I had I'll be shot if I'd wear it." The Rev. Mr. Sippiwissit wanted to assist at a table d'hôte and could not. Through a tailor's defection he had no trousers to wear. He said he was not a bit more particular than other people, but he had noticed that a clergyman going in to dinner without trousers was almost sure to excite remark. Fashion is not, therefore, a purely feminine vice. There you have at least two men who were slaves to it.

At the risk of wearing ourselves down as something else, we should like to call ourselves a third. For, though our ignorance of fashion is abysmal, our admiration is without bounds. Apart from the pleasures of pure mathematics, we know of nothing more intoxicating. Behind its history is the history of love. Whoever invented the one invented the other. In days when tattooing was apparel it has been authoritatively surmised that woman's attractiveness was so meagre that she was as incapable of detaining men as animals are of detaining each other. There were herds, not homes. The develop-

ment of the wardrobe was the development of the affections. The heart of man began to beat when woman ceased to resemble him. But it was not until meditation had made her modest and fashion fastidious that his enthrallment was complete. Then at once where the boor had been the knight appeared. In place of the female came the woman. Hitherto she had served. Thereafter she began to reign. In the States to-day she rules the roost. Fashion has done it. Hence our admiration for that active abstraction. Hence, too, the serenity of spirit which a well-dressed woman displays.

That serenity is quite natural. Barring such abominations as golf skirts and shirt waists, smart women have never got themselves up more fascinatingly than they do to-day. In the old prints of earlier days they are astounding to behold. Frocks were masonry and chignons architecture. Caricaturists represent *les très grandes dames* followed by carpenters widening and heightening the doors through which they pass. In one sketch a hairdresser is shown on a ladder arranging topmost curls. On the head of the Duchesse de Chartres a coiffeur succeeded in exhibiting her entire biography. The hair of the Princesse de Machin was manipulated into a cage, in which were loosed three thousand butterflies.

After the amputations of the Revolution fashion must have become simpler, but through epochs which we lack the art to describe it remained unalluring until Worth took a hand. The women whom he turned out looked like angels, only, of course, much better dressed. To-day the girls to whom Doucet has ministered are a caress to the eye. Personally, if we may refer to ourselves, there are frocks of Félix that have seemed to us more satisfactory than old masters, and there are also confections of Paquin that we have found as exhilarating as cups of champagne.

In what manner they are evolved and through what process, after their evolution, these ruedelapaixian seduc-

tions, primarily and, it may be, uniquely designed to pleasure some Princesse Lointaine, repeat themselves indefinitely, and variously vulgarized, reappear on the banks of the Neva, at the Golden Gate, in Bloomsbury and Bucharest, in Kandahar and Chicago, the Lord in his wisdom and mercy only knows, and in so saying it may be that we exaggerate, for, sure of nothing, we cannot be sure of that, although, indeed, there has just occurred to us an incident highly enlightening.

Some years ago the Queen of the Wends, Queen of the Goths, the Queen Matchmaker, who was the late Queen of Denmark, was also Queen of the Bicycle. In her obituaries the fact was not noted. Compared with her other titles it may have seemed unimportant. But it is only unimportant things that are really momentous. Louise of Hesse-Cassel became the progenitrix of sovereigns and left the course of events unaltered. She got on a wheel one day and changed the face of the earth.

The event occurred before the flood, a full decennium ago, at a time when no decent person would have been found dead on a bicycle. It was at her Summer court on the Baltic, through the wide leisures of which the selectest princesses and the least exclusive princes lounged, that the deed was done. What the mother of an Empress *in esse* and of another *in posse* does, smaller fry copy. The young royals, her grandchildren, followed suit. Photographed, bike in hand, their pictures emerged in shop windows. At sight of them Paris went mad. Then New York caught a fever which afterward spread to London, and ultimately was reported to have assumed epidemic proportions in Melbourne. So runs the world away. Meanwhile the Queen had put her wheel aside. Imitation is flattery's most odious form. None the less, a fashion had been set, industries founded, manufacturing multiplied, and all through a monarch's whim, because of a Summer

day an entirely amiable lady had seen fit to mount a wheel.

That wheel has since been relegated to the provinces. In its place is the auto. Presently that shall pass. Fancies vary, follies ditto. The one thing constant is change. Yet, as with the bike, so with bonnets. What great ladies do lesser ladies copy. Therein is the mode's *modus operandi*. These premises admitted, there arises the interesting problem, What shall the woman of the future wear? But before deciding, it will be useful to determine what sort of a person that woman will be.

Could the subject be considered from the standpoint of Dr. Schenck's promise that sex may be determined by maternal nutrition, it is obvious that woman would be scarce as Madeira and just as heady. But though Dr. Schenck promised he did not fulfil. As a consequence, the subject becomes more complex. At the same time, women being all alike in this that they are every one of them different, it follows that what is true of them to-day was true in the past and will be in the future. Individually diverse, collectively they are undistinguishable. To the naked eye at least. And it was certainly to remedy this defect that Fashion was invented. For however fancies may vary and follies change, however distressing last year's bonnet may look, woman herself does not alter. It is the mode that passes, not the model. The eternal feminine is everlastingly the same. To tell, then, what sort of a person the coming woman will be, take a receipt from astrology and first hatch her milliner.

Even so and even otherwise, though it is the mode that passes and not the model, though through the change of years and the convolution of things the heart of archaic Eve beats throughout femininity to-day, the beauty of the lady has developed. Yet, as nothing is constant but change, that beauty is doomed to diminish. In the part of the world from which we write it can't help itself. Beauty's patent of nobility is to be useless. Therein is

the sorcery of the rose. It charms and does nothing. Commerce, combinations, concentration and all that in them is, whether utilitarian, progressive or both, are beauty's antitheses. The trend of the age is to things very large and very ugly. In their construction, development and expansion we all either actively or passively collaborate. We can't do otherwise. The *Zeitgeist* won't let us. It has us fast in its maw. For the bewilderments of feminine witcheries it cares not a rap. That for which it does care is progress. In moulding us to its will it moulds our senses and muddles our souls. The instincts it instills we shall transmit. As a consequence the babies to come may develop both brains and brawn, yet never beauty. Now add the column up. The result is plain women.

And so much the better. Plain women are currently considered neglectable quantities. Such consideration comports an error that is profound. Memoirs and missions have acquainted us with many who dressed, undressed, even digressed divinely. The picture gallery of heroines is crammed with others who understood very well that while beauty may allure, graciousness enchains. A service of Sèvres with nothing on it is less appetizing than a *petite marmite*. Unaccompanied by other attributes, beauty alarms when it does not weary. Moreover, it is only the solely beautiful who are really plain. A really plain woman is one who, however beautiful, neglects to charm. By the same token a beautiful woman who contents herself with being merely beautiful is far plainer than a plain woman who does nothing but beautiful things. It is for this reason that the most beautiful woman in the world is always the woman whom we have yet to meet. It is for this reason, too, that in the Evangel of Women it is written, or rather will be when the Evangel appears: Blessed are the plain who succeed in charming, for theirs and theirs only is the Kingdom of Love.

But let us consider the subject more

seriously. Beauty is relative. Perfect beauty is a phrase and nothing else. Once upon a time a philosopher produced a large volume, in the course of which he proved that God is perfection. Then he produced a second volume equally large, in which he proved that perfection does not exist. It were impossible to be more exhaustively witty. Subsequently another philosopher produced a supplementary work in which he proved that in the absence of perfect beauty a lady who is equally ugly all over is more satisfactory than one unequally fair. It were impossible to be more profound. These views, however, public opinion has failed to endorse. But that is natural. Public opinion is the stupidity of one multiplied by the stupidity of all. Moreover, there is a disease of the eye that is catalogued as hemiopia. Of any given object the patient sees but half. It is one of Satan's greatest *tours de force* to have afflicted us all with that malady and rendered us blind to feminine defects. It must amuse him not a little to see how we are all taken in. Were it otherwise men would devote themselves to pious works. For that matter, it is only those who have penetrated the guile of the Very Low that do. As a consequence, when, in the future, women are plain, men will occupy themselves only with virtuous deeds. And is not that a consummation devoutly to be wished?

Yet because the coming Eve is to be plain it by no means follows that she will be painful. On the contrary. In the good old days of the

glory that was Greece, a woman whose peplos did not hang right in the back, whose general appearance was not modish, there and then became a disturber of the peace, and as such liable to a fine that varied with degrees of slatternliness from ten to a thousand drachmæ. Penalties not similar but cognate will, we assume with entire readiness, be visited by the legislators of the future on the woman who shall in her attire presume to neglect to charm. But we assume with equal readiness that such neglect will be rare. For while by that time hemiopia may have become curable and feminine defects be recognized and endured, it follows for that reason that women—*celles de la haute, bien entendu*—will be tricked out, adorned and embellished as were never even the goddesses of old.

How the ladies of the middle classes shall then appear interests us no more than how they appear to-day. We take it, however, that among them there will be some quite vulgar enough to be pretty. But about the plain yet peerless peris of the peerage of this and other lands there will be garments immaterial as moonbeams, gorgeous as quetzals, at once shadowy and stunning, luminous as the zāimph of Tanit, coruscating as the shower of Danæ, the triumph of art, poetry and the Rue de la Paix. For in default of feminine perfections such things as these must be, if only to perpetuate the species, and with it the jubilation and the guile of Satan and his pomps.



THE WAY OF A WOMAN

DOLLY—If you didn't tell her, how did you let her know that you hated her?

MADGE—When we met I kissed her three times.



MANY a man breaks himself by being too often on pleasure bent.

MARIONETTES

By Theodosia Garrison

THE poor little, pitiful things—
Each boasted a full control
Of purpose and mind and soul;
Each thought by his separate will
He walked, danced, fell, stood still;
They never suspected the strings
That dangled them here and there
Through rapture, grief or despair,
That held them in pairs and sets—
The poor little marionettes!

When they met each night on the stage
In the pasteboard theatre's space,
When they danced there face to face,
Each thought it wish of his own
That brought them together, alone;
Each thought it her pride, his rage,
The strength of each tinsel heart
That forced them to scorn, to part
In the light of the candle-jets—
The poor little marionettes!

Each gave himself praise or blame,
The poor little, pitiful things
That never suspected the strings,
That never guessed that they hung,
Pirouetted or parted, swung
By the hand that planned the game;
Each flattered himself that he
Made his own sole destiny,
His blisses, fears and regrets—
The poor little marionettes!

Ah, well! Is it worth a sigh
From us who are sure of this:
That we won for ourselves love's kiss,
That we made our time and hour,
Grew joy from bud to flower?
We can laugh at them, you and I,
At the poor little, pitiful things
That never suspected the strings—
Mere shadows and silhouettes!
The poor little marionettes!

THE WIDOW

BLACK-ROBED, sedate, demure—and yet withal
 There was a roguish twinkle in her eye
 That did not quite suggest the bier and pall;
 And so, emboldened—there was no one by—
 I pleaded for a kiss—a single kiss;
 Surely, I argued, 'twould be only right
 She should vouchsafe so small a boon as this—
 A widow's mite.

In vain I pleaded—she would not consent;
 She was surprised I should insult her thus;
 She had done nothing, she was confident,
 That I should think she was so frivolous;
 She was not used to being treated so;
 'Twas a poor way her friendship to requite;
 She never granted liberties—although
 Some widows might.

But though she stormed, I deemed her wrath assumed—
 She was, I thought, quite too demonstrative;
 And so, with reckless daring, I presumed
 Boldly to take what she refused to give.
 No word she spoke—quick as the lightning streak
 Her hand she raised—that hand so small and white—
 And then I felt upon my tingling cheek
 The widow's might!

R. L. C. WHITE.



AWAKENING INTELLIGENCE

DORA—Did Cholly get off any bright remark last evening?
ADA—Yes, bright for Cholly. He said he couldn't think of anything
 worth saying.



BASE BETRAYAL

BELLE—Raymond is the only true friend I have.
BESSIE—And you are going to marry him, I hear.

HIS PROPHYLACTIC FLIRTATION

By Guy Somerville

HIS Grace of Wuxtree was called the American Duke, because his mother was an American, and his wife, and his father's mother, and both of his sisters had been brought up in an American convent on the banks of the Hudson, near a place which is called Yonkers. Also he was wont to play poker rather than bridge or baccarat, and swore oaths that were strange to the Mall, and knew the dimensions of all the transatlantic fortunes to the last mill. But the Duke, as previously indicated, was married.

Now it chanced that in years gone by, when the Duke was visiting the States, and while the Duchess was yet at school in the process of being "finished," Providence caused him to fall in with Stowbridge, and what is yet more strange and fearful a thing, to love him. For Stowbridge kept from the Duke divers exploiters of wildcat mines and such as sell gold bricks in the market place; yea, thrice did he lift him up when he would have dashed his foot against a stone. And the Duke blessed Stowbridge and invited him to Haarlem Towers that Summer for a long, long visit, that they might royster together full merrily with wine and song and all sorts of other things that gladden the heart and make zigzag the steps of the sons of men.

But Stowbridge could not come, because for his great beauty he was loved by three maids, and his Summer had been promised equally to these. And the next Summer there were again three maids, and the next Summer other three; and so it befell that many years passed, and the Duke

married, and there were little dukes, before Stowbridge found time to go to Haarlem Towers, where well he wot that he would always be a welcome, favored guest. Then suddenly he made up his mind, and cabled and sailed, and nine days afterward, at precisely four of the afternoon, he alighted, with two trunks and a valet, on the platform of the railway depot at Noughton Manor, which, as all the world knows, is the nearest railway depot to the country seat of the Duke of Wuxtree.

A motor carriage showing the ducal arms—or, a chevron gules between three boars' heads erased, proper—swiftly gathered him up, with his appurtenances, and bowled him softly and well along silent English country roads, between sweet-scented hedges and through air heavy with the smell of fresh grass and new-mown virtue, which is the atmosphere of rural England from the Cinque Ports to the Tweed. Through a low-arched gateway he was speeded and down a beech-lined avenue skirted by rolling lawns and more hedges of a vivid, intensely vegetable green. Then they dropped him out on the broad veranda of the Towers, and he looked up into the face of the Eve of all this Eden. For, though he had never seen her before, he knew instinctively, as he looked into her dancing brown eyes, noted her splendid American figure, and took the slender hand she extended, that it was the Duchess of Wuxtree who greeted him at her front door.

"Mr. Stowbridge?"

"Stowbridge."

"Let me apologize for the rudeness

of Harry. We expected you; we had your cable and your wire from Liverpool last evening. But the Lords have been sitting over the dreadful Irish bill—I don't know what it's all about, I'm sure—and they stay up till all kinds of hours, and Harry has taken his seat so lately that he felt he could not decently stay away. You didn't go up to Town?"

He shook his head. He was feasting his eyes on her. She was unique; he had never seen anything like her before in England. The complexion of Devonshire cream and strawberries, which bespoke her healthy English life, and the frank ease bordering on unconventionality in her manner toward him—the ease that was of Manhattan, where she was born.

"No," he said. "No. I came directly up from Liverpool on the London & Northwestern. Had I gone to Town first I should have looked for Harry at Westminster."

"As it is," said the Duchess, with a charming smile, "perhaps you will not suffer much if I entertain you until this evening. I expect him back shortly after dinner. Meanwhile let me show you the historic spots and the places where things have happened," and she linked her fairy arm in his.

For an hour or more they roamed over the place. It was an old one and quite moth-eaten, and it reeked with memories, all of which she knew; and he listened as she told each tale, but he also looked. For the Duchess was very beautiful. And on the steamer coming over there had been no one.

Then she took him back to the house by a path overhung with vines, and showed him a conservatory snugly built on the side where the wind never blew, and seated him there in a low wicker chair while she swung gracefully into a hammock that was opposite.

"We keep the place open most of the Winter," said she. "And we *must* have flowers."

"I don't see how you could possibly be without them," said he, pointedly.

"Do you like our place?" said the Duchess.

"It's perfectly grand," said Stowbridge.

"The scenery—oh, well, there is better in the Midlands."

"But the associations," said Stowbridge, with ill-restrained admiration; "there are no better—anywhere."

The Duchess looked at Stowbridge, and he is beautiful to look upon. Her hand stole to her rich, burgundy-colored hair with a caressing, fluffing motion that is most trying to the male. Then she leaned far back in the hammock.

"There are so few," she murmured, languidly. "At least—so few close ones."

"It is better," said Stowbridge, becoming animated, "that there should be only a few—close ones."

"Oh," said she, "I don't mean very close."

"Nor I," said he. "Quite close—no more."

"The men Harry brings home," said the Duchess, "are so uninteresting. They all shoot, and ride, and—er—that sort of thing. And they're not in the least impressionable."

"They hide their wounds," said Stowbridge, vaguely. He was wondering what excuse he could possibly make for himself for this sort of thing. For he was puritanical, was Stowbridge, where the husband was his friend.

"A woman is different," said the Duchess. "She is like a flower—she needs to be constantly tended, and loved, and watched over. And she needs—change."

"Oh, more than that," said Stowbridge, deprecatingly. "Much more than change. She needs a private bank account and unlimited credit besides." The sun was streaming in among the plants, and it gilded the shell-like lobe of the Duchess's tiny ear. The Duchess also wore open-work things in maddening, tropical profusion. It was becoming more difficult with each instant to avoid flirting with the Duchess.

"Then again," said she, absently, "it is so embarrassing to look so young and girlish—I am young and girlish, am I not?"—Stowbridge nodded vigorously—"it is so embarrassing, I say, when one is a widow."

"A what?" said Stowbridge, in amaze.

A dimple occurred in the Duchess's soft, lacy throat.

"You did not think," she said, provokingly, "that I had married again so soon?"

"So soon?" said he. "I don't understand. Are you not the wife of the Duke of Wuxtree?"

She smiled.

"Yes, my vehement one! but not of the thirteenth Duke. My duke was the twelfth."

"Then you are——?"

"The Duchess Dowager," she finished.

"It is absurd!" he said, laughing.

"You are barely twenty-eight."

"Oh, I was his third wife," she said, with unconcern. "He was eighty when we married."

"That is horrible!" said he.

"I stood it beautifully," said she.

"It was only a year."

"I was thinking of him," said Stowbridge.

"Don't," said the Duchess Dowager.

"To think that he lasted a year!" said he, wickedly.

The Duchess flushed.

"It was the happiest year—" she began.

"And doubtless the most eventful—" said Stowbridge.

"Not at all," said she; "not one."

Stowbridge studied the ground critically.

"There was only Harry," she added.

"And he was by one of the—the early ones. Harry is the thirteenth Duke."

"Who is his Duchess?" said Stowbridge, suddenly. "I know he married—married an American."

"Oh, she's of no importance," said the Duchess Dowager. "She's a mild, wishy-washy thing with the smell of Newport still on her. She drinks

malted milk, and when she grows big she will have fits, which people will call 'seizures.' She's in the North just now, visiting cousins among the Scotch high-balls."

"What a charming picture!" said Stowbridge, smiling.

"Do you think so?" said the Duchess.

"But," said he, with a return to his former ardor, "the subject is interesting only because of the artist."

"*Tiens, mais c'est mieux*," smilingly said she.

"If," said Stowbridge, "I were not too busy I should fall in love with you." There was no necessity now for considering the Duke.

"Perhaps I might spare you a year," said the Duchess, right merry.

"It would be well worth the pain," said Stowbridge, gallically, "if it were but a month."

The Duchess sat upright in the hammock and looked full into his eyes.

"Tell me more," she said, as simply as a little girl.

"How strong is the hammock?" said Stowbridge, in uncertain wise.

"I saw three men sit in it once," said the Duchess, with superb unconsciousness. . . .

"Ah!"

"But of course——"

"Suppose——"

"They won't."

"What could we possibly say?"

"I am supporting you in the hammock, that's all."

"It is not the style," murmured the Duchess, "to which I am accustomed."

"That, thank God, is the beauty of it," said Stowbridge, reverently.

"Harry *never*—" she began.

"Of course not! His mother!"

She laughed deliciously.

"Harry is thirty-two," she said.

"He's a good child."

"I trust the House sits late," said Stowbridge.

"He'll be here on the ten o'clock train—he wired to me," said the Duchess.

"It's only six," said Stowbridge.

"Isn't it like being back in New York again?"

"You are the only man," said the Duchess, blushing dreadfully, "who has dared——"

"How about the twelfth Duke?" said he.

"He always said 'please,' first," said she.

"And you said—what?"

"Sometimes I said 'Yes.' "

"And sometimes——?"

"'No.' "

"That is precisely why," said Stowbridge, "I——"

"Oh! oh!"

"—don't say 'please,' first."

"He was only an Englishman," she said, apologetically.

"An Englishman is English first and a man afterward," said Stowbridge.

"He's a gentleman first," said the Duchess, in a tone of reproof.

"He's anything you say," said Stowbridge, becoming fatuous.

The Duchess extricated herself suddenly from the hammock. Stowbridge rose also, and they stood together for some seconds, and she felt the eager glow of the man's soul that was in him and the firm yet gentle touch of his great, strong arms.

"Let me go," said the Duchess, breathless, and she raced to the nearest glass pane and pressed her face against it to cool.

The pane had the effect of a mirror.

"See," she said, breathless still, "you have mussed all my hair."

Stowbridge advanced upon her with the air of a tiger that has tasted gore.

"I mussed——?"

She nodded.

"Then I will," said Stowbridge.

She gave a little scream.

"No, no, you must not!"

"You said I mussed."

She placed both hands, trembling, on his athletic chest.

"No more," she pleaded. "Not—not just now. Not for a while."

Stowbridge caught her hand and held it fast. There came into her face a startled look; a look almost of

terror. Stowbridge turned; the Duke of Wuxtree stood watching in the conservatory door.

"Ah, Stowbridge," said the Duke, drily.

He felt his face grow very red and round. Then he looked up from one to the other, and to his wonder he saw that the Duke and the Duchess were laughing. And in their eyes, turned toward each other, there was the look of perfect trust.

A light struck Stowbridge—struck him hard.

"She isn't the Dowager Duchess!" he exclaimed. "She's your wife!"

She smiled a "Yes" at him.

The Duke laughed out loud—his old, genial American laugh that Stowbridge knew and loved.

"It's a shame to tease him," said the Duke, "and he such a very new guest. Ethel, Ethel, we ought not to have done it—we ought not! It was all very well with Thornton, or Brattleborough, or Weeks, but Stowbridge is too decent a chap to worry. Come into the library, old man, and while the Duchess dresses—we will not dress to-night—we shall have American cocktails and full explanations. And when you understand you won't want to fight or anything."

Mechanically Stowbridge followed the Duke. But there was no pleasure in the cocktail.

"It's this way," said the Duke, as the smoke of his Khédive curled upward and lost itself in the arabesques at the top of the chandelier. "My wife is a very beautiful sort of person, and—er—quite generally admired, and that."

"I assumed," said Stowbridge, hoarsely, "that the admiration—and that—must be quite—universal."

There was something the matter with the end of the Duke's cigarette. He pressed it down more firmly and moistened the edges anew. Then he said, absently: "Eh! well, yes—universal. But bless her—" and his eyes shone with love and faith—"she hasn't a thought in the world that is not mine."

"On that point I am certain," said Stowbridge.

"Now it's a peculiar thing," said the Duke, "that every man who comes to this place sooner or later tries to start a desperate flirtation with her."

Stowbridge opened his eyes and ears both very wide.

"Oh!" said he.

"So that," pursued the Duke, "we have decided—my wife and I—that the best way is to have the flirtation right at the start, you know—as soon as the man comes, in fact—and have it over."

"After which—?" said Stowbridge, very uncomfortable.

"After which," finished the Duke, finely, "they—the man, I mean—gets to be a sort of immune. You never fall in love with the same woman, in the same visit, more than once," he added, sententiously.

"Now, that," said Stowbridge, "is quite true."

"Have a cigar," said the Duke, "and—another one of these."

"Then it was all prearranged," said Stowbridge, thoughtfully.

The Duke smiled, sympathetic.

"About my staying in town and having her receive you? Yes," said he. "We always do it that way the first time the man comes."

"And the story about her being the Dowager?"

"That," said the Duke, "is the most artistic touch of all. She invented it. It is necessary only with the most refractory men—like you."

"Suppose," said Stowbridge, "before he finds out, the man should—well, should get to love her very much, and should—should be reckless, and that?"

The Duke's strong hand closed tightly around the stem of his cocktail glass.

"Then the joke would be on us," said he; "on the Duchess and myself. And," he added, dreamily, as an afterthought, "it would be a damned bad thing for the man!"

The cocktail glass here broke.

"I see," said Stowbridge; and he thought he did. "And I'll have just one more, thank you—just one. You used to part your hair in the middle."

"I did," said the Duke, rising. "But my wife objected to it. Which reminds me that I think I heard her come down a few moments ago. Will you give her your arm, old chap? I am hungry, and I think we may as well go in."

"I feel jolly sloppy," said Stowbridge. "But you say not to dress, and what you say goes."

And the Duke smiled faintly.

Stowbridge told this story to us at the club, one night in June, while he sat in the bow window sipping the fragrant mint and watching the theatre-bound hansoms with their white-gloved passengers bowl temptingly down Northumberland avenue. He finished, and there was a long silence.

Stowbridge rose and lighted a fresh cigar by the flame of the swinging lamp.

"And what I don't understand," said he, nervously; "what I never *shall* understand, is this: How did she know when the Duke was going to open the door?"

I laid my hand on his shoulder. There was a great truth which it was meet that he should know.

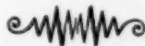
"She didn't," said I.

"Then," said he, "the Duchess was a terrible liar."

"Quite so," said I. "But—" and the others nodded, for they were wise men and experienced—"she wasn't a circumstance to the Duke!"

But Stowbridge does not understand; not even yet. He is thick-headed, and the ancestors of him were Welsh. But I meet the Duke of Wuxtree now and again on the Row, and when I do, I, who am a Radical, take off my cap.

Whereat he marvels greatly.



COMPENSATION

MY stock has gone down and my tailor has sent
 To request that I settle my bill;
 My landlady asks with a frown for her rent,
 And there isn't a cent in the till.
 The governor storms and my mother's in tears;
 There's a coldness betwixt me and Nell,
 But I'm utterly dead to regrets and to fears,
 For my meerschaum is coloring well.

I've a cold in my head and a pain in my back,
 My eyes are like lobsters in hue;
 The horse that I played came in last at the track,
 And I'm sure that I should have felt blue.
 But I walked into town, and I walked all the way
 With a step it's surprising to tell,
 And I'm gayest to-night in the ranks of the gay,
 For my meerschaum is coloring well.

At first I had fears of what looked like a crack,
 And my breath came in gasps of alarm,
 But oh, how the joy of my heart flooded back
 When I found that 'twas nothing to harm.
 And so ever since I have nursed it with care,
 With thrills that my heart cannot quell,
 And I've bored all my friends to relate the affair
 That my meerschaum is coloring well.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.



DEFINING THE DIFFERENCE

MRS. SCRAPPINGTON—Women do not worship the almighty dollar as
 men do.

MR. SCRAPPINGTON—No, they worship the almighty ninety-nine cents!



HUMOROUSLY HANDICAPPED

BIBBS—It is very amusing to watch Sellers play golf.

GIBBS—Why?

BIBBS—He has an impediment in his speech.

THE PRICE OF HONOR

By Lloyd Osbourne

THE sight of the darkened lodge and the great iron gates of Holme Manor made Jasper insensibly relax his pace. He was to take her no farther, she told him in a whisper; he was to let her find her way through the park alone; he must let her go now and say good-night. But Jasper was more than loath to end their midnight walk together. In an undertone he pleaded with her and begged, while his pretty companion pressed imperceptibly closer to his arm, as if she shared some of his reluctance. He felt a sudden, surging sense that to lose her now was more than he could bear; he remembered how little he could ever hope to see of her again; how swiftly she would pass again into that great world, the doors of which were so inexorably barred to himself. He was a poor and struggling man, without friends or birth or money to help him forward; she a queen of a rich, jealous and impenetrable society, whose royal right was universally accorded. He had had her for his little hour, and must now give her up forever, like some Kaffir with a diamond, hugging it for a moment to his bosom before the taskmaster can take it from him.

In the silence that fell on them both he felt, as it seemed to him, the whole longing of his life; a longing that in some inscrutable, bewildering fashion she appeared to share with him and communicate with every movement of her body; while above his head the iron barrier loomed like an emblem of their divided future. The dusty road was his to follow, while she would vanish

within the great cool recesses of her park and pass out of his existence forever. What right had he to ask more of her, he who had already been accorded so much? What could he do but press her hand and go, to cherish in his inmost heart the memory of her radiance and of her kindness to him that night? Yes, he must not impair, by a single unguarded word, the tender trust she had put in him. He was poor, but, please God, he was still a gentleman.

Mrs. Yarborough stopped at the gateway and stood for a moment looking up at him.

"Shall I not wake them at the lodge?" he asked.

"Don't disturb them," she answered, taking a ring from her finger and showing him how ingeniously it concealed a tiny Bramah key.

"It opens everything," she said. "It is my master-key to all the Manor."

Slowly and hesitatingly she inserted it in the lock.

"My prison door," she whispered. And then, with a sudden intensity, she exclaimed: "Oh, how I hate it all! Oh, Jasper, pity me!"

His hand was touching hers. The little key excused the contact and remained passive in the double grasp. Together they turned it this way and that, prolonging, if only for a moment, their sweet companionship. A breath stirred the trees and broke the deep silence of the night; it seemed as if the sleeping world had forgotten them, as if the dark woods were theirs alone.

"My prison door," she whispered again.

"I cannot let you go," pleaded Jasper; "I will not let you go!"

She did not reply, only smiled back at him with eyes like stars. Jasper trembled and his heart began to leap within his breast. He never knew how it happened, but of a sudden she was quivering in his arms and he was raining kisses on her panting mouth.

She burst out with something he could not hear, and then: "Oh, Jasper, let me go!"

But Jasper only held her tighter.

"Let me go!" she repeated, aloud, and springing fiercely away from him, she fled into the darkness.

Jasper was after her in an instant. She stumbled and fell, and he caught her in his strong arms. She struggled no longer, but lay with her pale face against his shoulder. He could have cried to think that he had hurt her. He begged, incoherently, for her forgiveness; that for pity's sake she would open her eyes; he tried, in an agony of contrition, to brush the pine needles from the lace of her ball dress.

She looked up at him wildly, still gasping for breath. He waited for her reproaches, for the stabbing words of an outraged and insulted woman. Brute that he was, he wished that the earth would open and swallow him up. She raised her hands, her beautiful, blue-veined hands, on which the diamonds shone in the starlight, and with tender deliberation she clasped them behind his neck, and drawing her face to his she kissed him passionately on the lips.

"Oh, Jasper," she whispered, "what have you done to me? I love you! I love you!"

II

JASPER arrived at the park gates an hour before the appointed time and had to stroll interminably about the woods until his slow-moving watch at last terminated his exile. A manservant told him that Mrs. Yarborough wished to see him on the rose terrace, and civilly guided him through the formal gardens for which Holme Manor was

everywhere so famous. The wide walks and marble steps, the unending sward, the statues, the ornamental water on which swans were sailing, all daunted the young engineer with a sense of luxury, of a wealth refined and aristocratic in which he seemed to himself a coarse intruder. It reminded him of the drop scene of a theatre, as he glanced at those vistas of calculated beauty, precise and artificial as some old Italian print; and while he could not altogether resist the charm of so studied a picturesqueness, it appeared to him more as a frightful barrier interposing itself between him and the woman he loved. He would have been happier could he have met her in some old orchard or at the corner of a country road amid the billowing wheat fields. Here, at the tail of a creature in a livery coat, he felt he was invading a world all unknown to him, and his presumption again seemed to strike him dumb. Who was he, to lift his eyes to the mistress of such scenes and splendors, to this exquisite patrician for whose sweet favor so many men must have struggled in vain? He looked at his ungloved hands, his blunt, sunburned, sinewy hands, and remembered with emotion that she had kissed them.

The man left him on a terrace overlooking the tennis courts and told him that he would find Mrs. Yarborough at the farther end, among the roses. Jasper went forward alone, in a tumult of hope and expectation not unmixed with a kind of fear. A few steps brought him within view of Mrs. Yarborough, who was heaping a little basket with red and white rosebuds. Her poise as she half-bent over the flowers was full of elegance and grace. She was indeed an admirably pretty woman, one of those dazzling blondes who seem to shed round them a light peculiarly their own, and tread their way through a mist of beauty. Jasper's heart swelled at sight of her and then as quickly sank again, for she raised her eyes to his with an expression so strange and pitiless that he stood transfixed, unable for the moment to even speak.

"I have come," he blurted out at last.

She searched his face again with a queer, cold scrutiny that dashed his last hopes to the ground. Then she offered him the tips of her fingers.

"How wretched you are looking!" she said.

"What could you expect?" he returned, devouring her with his eyes.

Side by side they walked slowly along the terrace. Jasper looked down at the point of her parasol that she swung lightly between them, as if to guard herself from any closer contact.

"Jasper," she began, abruptly, "have you ever felt ashamed of yourself?"

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Ashamed? I don't understand."

"Ashamed, mortified," she went on, in the same colorless voice—"oh, Jasper, so hideously mortified that it seems to kill you to look a person in the face? so mortified that you could drown yourself in a pond like a lovesick servant girl?"

Jasper made no reply.

"God knows what possessed me," she continued, passionately. "I could die of the shame—the humiliation of it. You must never think of me in that way again, Jasper; you must put me out of your life; you must go away and never let me see you again. The other night I was mad—all women are mad at times, Jasper. I thought I was a good woman; I know I am a good woman; I never dreamed I could be so low and wicked."

Jasper cried out inarticulately. He tried to take her hand, but she snatched it from him.

"How dare you touch me!" she cried, widening the distance between them as if he contaminated her. "I suppose that you can insult me now with impunity; that I cannot even complain or cry for help; that I must bear with you in silence, like some wretched creature of the streets!"

Jasper's face burned.

"You are ungenerous," he said. "You know I am not that kind of

man; you know that I love you better than anything in the world. You asked me just now if I had ever felt ashamed. I do feel ashamed, indeed, that you should so misjudge me. I thought you trusted me at least a little; I had some right to think you trusted me a little. You seem to think I have no honor or anything."

"Forgive me," she said, "forgive me, Jasper." And then, with a sudden change in her voice she cried out: "Oh, Jasper, I want you to blot it out of yourself; I want you to go away and forget that I ever existed; forget my name, my face, my folly, everything about me. Absorb yourself in other women; drive them mad with your love; take everything they give you, and more; overlay the last memory of me with the pleasures that you will find in them; and never, never, never even think of me again!"

"You know I shall not forget you," he returned. "I could not forget you, however much I might try. And as for the other women you speak of, I shall not vulgarize you, or the dear memory I shall always have of you, by pretending to divide my love with them. But I will go away, because you ask me to; and you need not fear that I shall ever trouble you again."

"Oh, Jasper," she said, "I knew you would not fail me. You have lifted a mountain off my heart. But remember, I shall not breathe until you are gone."

He stood and looked at her. He was stunned by her brutality; he could scarcely believe that she meant thus to dismiss him, to send him away forever.

"Won't you give me one of these to take with me?" he said, huskily, touching a rose on her bosom.

She slowly detached it and gave it to him; and as he turned it in his fingers his heart cried out for a single tender word. He was still hoping, still longing, when she suddenly plucked the flower from his unresisting hand and crumpled it into a hundred pieces.

"What childishness!" she exclaimed. "Go, Jasper, go!"

He looked at her again, and from her to the scattered petals of the rose, lying on the white marble like drops of blood; and then, lifting his hat, he walked away.

III

HE lost no time in fulfilling the terms of his promise. Heartsick and angry though he was, and at times more than half-rebellious, he felt that he was in honor bound to obey her imperious will. He had a stormy scene at the office; another with his parents at home. It reminded him of the beginning of the war to fight those domestic battles over again, and to set his teeth in obstinate decision. But his goal was no longer that green island with its animated and unforgettable scenes, its horrors and its triumphs, but a breathless city of innumerable streets and a room in a cheap hotel. He was determined that come what might, he would go no farther than New York; he could not bring himself to put a wider space between himself and the woman he still loved, in spite of what he called her cruelty and her heartlessness.

He looked about for a new situation. He was offered one in Colorado, one in Chicago, one in the New Almaden quicksilver mines of California; but in New York he could find nothing. His money dwindled; his quest was a round of mortifications and rebuffs; nobody wanted him. One day he dressed himself in his shabbiest clothes and went out to a small factory on the outskirts of the city. It was a tranquil, old-fashioned place beside a little river; millstones had given way to dynamos, and the water that had once ground wheat for Washington's army now gave life to electric wires and set a thousand busy wheels in motion. Jasper was engaged as a common workman at three dollars a day, and he took the homeward train whistling. This was a smart descent from two hundred a month, clean hands, and his own office; but what did he care? He was

eager to get to work again, eager to work and to forget. As he was packing up to leave the hotel a maid brought him a little parcel stamped with the postmark of his native town. He opened it and discovered, imbedded in a nest of moss, a single red rose.

IV

A YEAR passed. Mrs. Yarborough continued to lead, as before, the wandering, butterfly life of a society queen, incessantly flitting from place to place in the perpetual pursuit of pleasure; yachting, dancing, paying visits; darting off to Paris for new dresses; everywhere the gayest of the gay, everywhere the same radiant, happy, exquisite creature, with her beauty undimmed and her eyes as bright as ever—the only woman who appeared never to tire of the mad whirl or lose an iota of her zest for it.

Outside the narrow limits of society there are not many people who now recall the accident at Martin's Siding, where the Washington Limited was derailed. The papers gave but a few lines to the disaster, and defended or blamed the company according to their politics. Two persons only were reported injured, one of them being Mrs. Yarborough.

She was delirious all the day she was first brought home to Holme Manor and recognized no one; but in the evening, as her husband was striding up and down the corridor outside her room, the door opened and the nurse told him that his wife was conscious at last.

"Thank God!" said Yarborough.

"She wants to see you badly, sir," said the nurse. "She says she must see you."

"But Dr. Coleridge said—" began the master of the house.

"You had better come," said the woman, in a lower tone, glancing up at him significantly; "indeed, I think you ought to come."

Yarborough threw away the unlighted cigar he had been chewing and followed the nurse into his wife's

room. It was close and hot and dark, and filled with the penetrating smell of ether and iodoform. Yarborough turned a bit sick as he knelt beside the bed and buried his face in the counterpane. The shattered woman was propped up with pillows, and the ends and corners of surgical scaffolding showed through the sheet that covered her.

"Give me some of that, nurse," she said, pointing to an open bottle of champagne; "and I think you had better give him a glass also," she added, in a whisper, wanly smiling. "Then you can leave us, please."

The nurse softly closed the door. Husband and wife looked into each other's eyes.

"James," she said, "I am dying!"

He tried to say something in reply; to imitate the doctor's smiling confidence; to laugh away such an incredible contingency. But he failed miserably, and the laughter died in his throat.

"Oh, Alice," he said, "oh, my dear, dear Alice."

"I know I am dying," she went on. "I can feel myself going all the time; I am keeping myself alive, just as I used to keep myself awake. It is a strange feeling, James." She paused, then began again. "James, I want to die. . . . I am telling you this so that you can understand . . ." she continued. "Dying people can't talk like other people; their time is too short to lie, to beat about the bush, to use the finer shades. For once, before they pass away forever, they must speak out the truth. I am afraid what I have to tell you will be very disagreeable; people don't keep back the nice things to die with, James. I am sorry, because I know you will hate me when you hear it!"

Yarborough stared at her with a sort of fascinated surprise.

"Alice," he said, "what is this thing you want to tell me?—this thing that will make me— No, I could not hate you," he broke off, with a groan.

"I will tell you soon enough," she went on. "I want you to understand

first that in a way I have not been a bad wife to you, James. My name has never been in the papers; I never exceeded my allowance; I dropped the people you did not like me to know; I have kept a hundred men at arm's length. I cannot recollect that I was ever cross, or exacting, or troublesome, or more unreasonable than any other woman. You will grant me all that, James?"

"It is true," he said, solemnly. "You have been the best wife a man ever had."

"Do you remember when you were courting me," she asked, "when you said that in spite of the twenty years between us you would manage to make me love you?—that the right kind of man could always make his wife love him; that you had no fear if only I would marry you? Do you remember saying all that, James? Again and again you said it. I warned you that I could not care for you; that you were no more to me than a dozen other men. Oh, James, do you remember?—and all my miserable fears and doubts?"

Yarborough was looking at her fixedly. There was a fine anguish on his handsome face. Blind fool that he was, he had thought she loved him.

"I remember," he said.

"You lied to me!" she cried, hoarsely. "You never made me love you. You promised, and you never kept your promise. I trusted you, and you failed me. I waited for the love to come, and it did not come. James," she went on, more calmly, "you were always an honorable man; you were always a just man; you could always see the other side, even when it was you who were wronged. Now I ask you, James, as I lie here dying, do you owe me nothing for my blighted life; for those years so empty of everything a woman longs for; those irrevocable years?"

"What would you have me do?" he cried out. "For God's sake, what do you want me to do?"

She closed her eyes and lay for a while silent. Then she opened them again and looked wildly up at him.

"I have so little time," she moaned.
 "Oh, James, you will hate me so!"

"I cannot imagine what you are hinting at," he exclaimed; "and if you never cared for me I don't see how it matters what I feel."

"You don't understand," she said.
 "I want you to help me. You *must* help me."

"And you are doubtful still," he said. "Oh, Alice, how little you know me!"

"Do you remember Jasper Trevelyan?" she asked.

Yarborough started. Then he repeated the name to himself: "Jasper Trevelyan." He remembered him, of course—the Rough Rider fellow; electrician or something; rode well; a handsome boy with an air. Well, what of it?

"James," she said, "I love that man!"

Her husband looked down at her in absolute consternation. His jaw fell. He pressed his pale, strained face close to hers and seemed to stare her through and through.

"You love him!" he cried.

She met his eyes unshrinkingly.

"Why did you marry me?" she exclaimed. "A woman must love, or die, James."

He took her hand and clenched it in his own, clenched it until she screamed.

"Tell me one thing—" he cried, convulsively, and then stopped short.

"No, I cannot ask it," he said. "That Trevelyan, that boy!"

"James," she said, "I broke it off at once. I sent him away. It was all I could do not to go with him. My own name was nothing, but I was not bad enough to disgrace yours. I know I have been a bad wife to you, but I had some consideration left . . . some shame. I knew my weakness, and I sent him away. . . . I never wrote to him or anything."

Yarborough sat with his face buried in his hands. His dear wife, his Alice, his beautiful Alice! He felt bewildered, unspeakably bewildered and ashamed; he could have cried, not only for himself, but for her.

"And now I am dying," she said.

"I hope to God you are!" he cried out, with a sudden flame of anger in his heart. "I only wish you could have died before you met him!"

"Of course, I know it is horrid for you," she replied, "and that you are shocked and all that. Men always are when their wives go wrong, though they are busy half the time leading other women astray. And as to your being shocked, I tell you I am shocked at myself. If it wouldn't sound hypocritical, James, I should ask your pardon. But, admitting that I am utterly bad and all that—I am not trying to defend myself at all—don't you think I deserve something for having sent him away, for having refused to let the thing go on?"

"Deserve something!" he repeated.

"Deserve what? You talk as if you wanted to be paid because you were not worse."

"I *do* want to be paid," she returned. "I have been leading up to that all along. James, before I die, I must say good-bye to him."

"To that fellow!" he cried, springing to his feet in great agitation. "Are you really asking me to bring your lover to your bedside? My God, what kind of man do you take me for, Alice?"

"No," she exclaimed, "you are going to do this for my sake, because you are a just man, because you love me, because I am dying. You were always chivalrous, always high-minded and noble. You know you owe me some reparation for my wasted life; for the good, little as it was, that was in me. I was bad, I know, but I might have been worse. Oh, James, think of the pleasure I have been to you; think of the lie I have lived all these years in pretending to care for you; think how uncomplainingly I should have lived it to the end! And it was for you I did so; it was for you I suffered and sacrificed myself!"

In a fever of restlessness Yarborough strode at random about the room, his wife's hungering eyes following him everywhere. There were dark rings round them and they

burned like coals of fire. Good God! how ill she looked! how livid and ghastly! One could see, indeed, that she was dying. Was it not a punishment for her guilt? Her guilt! He repeated the word to himself. Was he then himself so guiltless? Had he never himself transgressed? Could he look down the long vale of his years and fail to see the faces of women betrayed and ruined; women who in their different ways had loved him, women who had given him in their time their all for his pretense of love, their treasure for his counterfeit? But he was a man; it was different with a man. But was it different? he asked himself. In the scales of an even justice would he not be found twenty-fold the sinner? She had never loved him; in the bottom of his heart he had always suspected it. She had told him so frankly from the start, when he had overruled her and promised her what was never destined to come. With what assurance, too, he had made that promise, confident man of the world that he was, who had not scrupled to take her to his arms and swear to teach her love. And if he had failed, was he then to say the fault was hers? was he to blame and revile her? was he to cast her disgrace in her teeth as she lay dying?

He came back to the bed. He took her hand and kissed it.

"I will go, Alice," he said.

She gave him a piercing look, as if to assure herself that he would not deceive her; and again her eyes sought the clock on the mantel. Her point gained, she was in the throes of a new impatience.

"You must hurry," she cried.

"Run, James! If you telephone they will hold the express at Littleborough. You can just do it."

"But where?" he cried. "Where?"

She motioned with her hand in the direction of her jewel case.

"There," she exclaimed, in an agony of excitement, "on a card in the case with my diamond necklace. No, not that one; I tell you not that one; the other, James, the other! It

is near New York—a factory or something."

In a moment Yarborough had the thing in his hand and was stumbling out of the room. He swore at the nurse as she came fluttering up to him, and roughly bade her go back to her place. Then he descended the stairs and hurried away in the direction of the stables.

V

It was early in the morning when the train dropped him at the little suburban station, and he asked to be directed to the electrical works. He found his way without difficulty, for the old gray mill showed plainly through the trees, and he had, besides, a guide in the rustic river. A clerk stopped him at the outer office and demanded, with some surprise at the sight of so haggard and unkempt a visitor, to know the nature of his business. On being reassured by the sight of Yarborough's card the clerk sent him down through a rambling passage, with instructions to stop at the third workshop on the right. Yarborough did as he was bidden, and entering the open doorway found himself alone in the room with Jasper Trevelyan. The young man sprang up from the complicated machine he seemed to be piecing together with the aid of a dozen drawings pegged out here and there on the floor.

"Mr. Yarborough!" he cried, in astonishment.

Yarborough looked at him in silence. He did not know how to begin. He satisfied himself first that they had the room to themselves.

"I don't suppose you can imagine the reason of my coming here," he said at last.

Jasper shook his head.

"Trevelyan," he broke out, "the long and short of it is that my wife is dying and wants to see you."

"Dying!" cried Jasper, only partly realizing the significance of the word. "You say she is dying!"

"She was in the accident at Martin's Siding," said Yarborough—"the accident to the Washington Limited on Wednesday. You must have read about it in the papers."

Jasper turned pale.

"I never heard of it," he said.

"She has told me something," continued Yarborough, with a stony face. "She has told me that she—that she loves you—that she must see you before she dies. She has sent me to bring you."

Jasper bent his head in shame. He attempted to say that it was not true; that she must have been delirious to say such a thing; that he could not come and put her—put himself—in such a position before the world. But he faltered in spite of himself, even when he was asserting with all the vehemence he could that there had never been anything between them.

"See here," said Yarborough, gnawing his mustache, "she told me this herself. I have not come here to argue with you about it. I have come here to take you to her."

Jasper looked at him with wide-open eyes.

"You are asking me to do a dreadful thing," he said. "And do you think nothing of yourself?"

"I am trying not to think of myself at all," said Yarborough.

"The fact of my going would look like a confession of guilt," Jasper continued, "and what will you dare to say to her when she returns to consciousness and discovers the position into which you have put her? I tell you again this is nothing but madness, a hallucination—a monstrous hallucination. I don't know what to call it. I don't know what to do. Can't you understand that she must have been out of her mind?"

"She is as sane as I am," returned Yarborough, grimly. "You don't imagine, do you, that I should be here if I thought she was not? She is dying—God help her!—she is dying; and it is her last wish to see you. I don't reproach you; I am not playing the injured husband; I don't count in the matter except to bring you. I

am not saying it's nice for you, Trevelyan; but what in God's name do you think it is for me?"

Jasper did not reply at once, but looked down at his outspread plans.

"I will be frank, too," he said at last. "I must tell you plainly I have not the money to go; and under the circumstances you can scarcely expect me to avail myself of yours. Besides, we are working night and day on a Government order. I should have to throw up my job if I went. They would never take me back if I left them in the lurch. It is not that I should mind that myself, if I were the only one to consider, but the fact is, my father's illness has left me the only bread-winner of the family. Times have changed with me, Mr. Yarborough."

"They are holding a special train for us at the Grand Central," said Yarborough, "and I have telegraphed the superintendent to clear the line all the way. You can come back in the same train, and there is no reason why it should cost you a penny. As for your position here, I shall make it a point to see that you do not lose it. Or if you do lose it, I will find you another as good."

Jasper still hung back.

"My God!" said Yarborough, "we cannot dilly-dally like this. Every moment is priceless. Can't you show a little generosity on your side; can't you come without any further ado, without putting me to any further humiliation? My God! do you want me to go down on my knees to you?"

Jasper could not resist this last appeal.

"Yes, I will go," he said, and he looked at his watch. "If we hurry we can catch the fast train to town."

VI

THE special was waiting for them at the Grand Central, and the general manager was himself on the platform to hand Yarborough a little sheaf of telegrams and see him off. Yarbor-

ough opened them one by one as the train rolled swiftly out of the depot, and passed them to his companion. They were all bulletins, short and business-like, in clogged blue type—the time given to the minute, pulse so much, temperature so much, respiration so much, condition low, no improvement. Jasper arranged them in order on the seat before him, and it came over him with a fresh shock that she was dying.

Dying!

He felt an extraordinary sense of desolation as he looked about the long, empty car and stole a glance from time to time at Yarborough. His duty accomplished, the man seemed to have no further concern with him, but sat in a sort of stupor, staring at the floor. Stations flew past the windows; towns, cities and side-tracked trains filled with people. The whole system had been dislocated to give them an open road, and the engineer was driving them at a headlong pace. Twice they stopped—once for water, once to wait for an overdue limited, that thundered past them and disappeared in a roar, fluttering its green flag. At each place there was a new bunch of telegrams for Yarborough—pulse so much, temperature so much, respiration so much, condition low, no improvement. These, as before, were handed Jasper to read, as if he, too, had the right to see them. The porter would have brought them a meal, which the general manager at New York had considerably put on board for them, but Yarborough dismissed the negro with a peremptory gesture of disgust, and Jasper was equally disinclined to eat. In moody silence the pair wore out the day and sat each absorbed in his own bitter and melancholy thoughts. Night came. The lamps were lighted. There was another brief stop in the twilight; another packet of telegrams—pulse so much, temperature so much, respiration so much, condition low, no improvement.

There was a break with a pair of horses to meet them at the station. The groom who led the way to the

vehicle told Yarborough in an undertone that his wife was still alive.

"They say your lady is beside herself to see you," he said, and then excused himself in order to go back and telephone the news of their arrival.

They drove off without him, the thoroughbreds plunging and rearing as the coachman flicked them with his whip and turned their heads toward home. They tore through the dark woods, skirted the lodge and the huge swung-back gates, at the side of which a servant was standing with a lantern, and drew up at last before the steps and the great lighted doorway of the Manor house.

Yarborough led his companion through the throng of silent servants who were gathered there to wait his coming, and was soon in gloomy conference with the doctor. Jasper stood aside to let them talk together, accustoming himself by degrees to that hushed and troubled atmosphere, in which he felt more than ever the sense of his own unwarrantable intrusion. Whispering surrounded him; liveried servants passed and repassed, giving and receiving orders; he saw a nurse in a nun-like costume descending the stairs; a careworn doctor with tired eyes handing a note to a groom and explaining where it was to go. Over everything there seemed to hang the shadow of that impending death.

He shrank as someone touched him on the arm. It was the doctor with whom Yarborough had been engaged, the famous Coleridge, of New York.

"Come," he said, coldly, and led Jasper up the stairs.

Holme Manor was a large house, a very large house. It reminded Jasper of a hotel as he was guided through its high corridors and past innumerable rooms. He remembered having heard that the Yarboroughs often entertained fifty guests at a house party, and he began to realize how much such a number implied. How rich they were, these people!—and this was only one of their houses, one of

several; only a part of their feverish, distracting, wandering life. He asked himself again what he was doing in such a place, amid such vast and comfortless splendor; and the thought of his errand daunted him afresh. Good God! how he drew away and trembled when the doctor stopped before a door, pressed it back without knocking and spoke for a moment with the nurse within! She came out, looking all the while at Jasper with a sad curiosity that seemed to tell him she understood.

She motioned him to go in.

"For her sake, don't stay too long," she said.

VII

It was past midnight when he found himself once again outside her room. He had tried before to go; but those passionate arms had held him fast, that despairing voice had melted all his resolution. She had refused the drug that would have separated them, saying that she would rather suffer a thousand times than lose him in such oblivion; she had laid her fainting head on his shoulder and begged him to help her die; she had clung to him in her agony, calling him the fondest names between her paroxysms. Once, when the nurse appeared and he would have drawn away from her, she held him with fierce tenacity. "I am not ashamed of my lover," she said, and then to the nurse she added: "Would you not have loved him, too; would not any woman have loved him?" He had remained with her long afterward, until her hot hand relaxed in his and she sank into a deep stupor; until the nurse, looking with pity on his white face, whispered him to go. "Kiss her for the last time," she said, "for I must call the doctor now."

He never knew how he managed to blunder through those interminable halls, to find himself at last in a little study where Yarborough was standing before a fire. A servant must have guided him or one of the nurses. It was all a blank to him. Under the circumstances, however, his host was

the last man he would have cared to see, and he cursed the fate that brought them once more together.

"How is she?" Yarborough inquired, with grating conventionality.

"I am afraid she is no better," Jasper murmured; and then, with a sudden revulsion at the utter falseness of his tone, "My God, why should we pretend!" he gasped. "You know as well as I do that she cannot outlive the night."

Yarborough turned away. He walked to the window and looked out into the darkness. When he returned to his place before the fire he had conquered whatever agitation had possessed him.

"Sit down," he said. "You must let me offer you some refreshment."

Jasper gazed at him without replying, and fumbled at his watch.

"I must go," he said. "I must go."

"You have not eaten anything all day," said Yarborough. "If you could see your face in the glass it would frighten you. Let me give you a whiskey and soda," he added, turning to the tray on the table and lifting the decanter with a shaking hand. "Say when?"

"Yarborough," said Jasper, after a gulp at his glass. "I wonder if you realize what a fine part you have taken in all this, and how damned nobly you have acted! It comes bad from me, I know, to say it, for I feel like the dirt under your feet; but I want to say it; I must say it; and if you can, I want you to believe me."

Jasper pulled out a handkerchief to mop the perspiration from his forehead, and there came tumbling out with it a long, lustrous lock of hair. Yarborough turned away his head; Jasper grew whiter than before as he crushed it back into his pocket.

"I have tried to do what a gentleman should, I suppose," said Yarborough. "Perhaps—I don't know—perhaps I have acted like an ass. If I have made a mistake it is at any rate on the side of kindness to a person who is very dear to

me; a person who, whatever the wrong she may have done me, has still a claim on my forbearance and generosity. There are many who would deny such a claim. Two days ago I should have denied it myself; but two days ago I was a different man. As for you," he went on, "you have put me into the most humiliating position one man can put another; you have seen, I think, and you have appreciated, I think, that I have taken a course in this matter which almost no other person could have brought himself to do. I tell you this because I want you to let no false pride stand in the way of what I intend to do for you now."

With these ambiguous words on his lips he seated himself at a carved davenport and drew out—not the pair of pistols that Jasper was more than half-prepared to see—but a cheque-book—an unmistakable, buff-colored cheque-book.

"I desire to make you a slight acknowledgment—" he said, and then broke off. "In your way you have laid me under an extraordinary obligation," he began again. "It may seem a strange thing to say, but I feel grateful to you. I know very well how painful, how impossible even, it must have been for you to come here; to put yourself in such a false and detestable position. I doubt whether I myself, at your age and in a corresponding imbroglio, should have shown a similar courage and a similar consideration. It would have been so easy for you to refuse; you would have spared yourself so much if you had refused; yet, with your eyes open, you came in response to my—to her—appeal to you."

He bent once more over the cheque-book.

"No, no!" cried Jasper. "I cannot take your money. You misjudge me. I am not so low as to take your money."

Yarborough turned slowly and with apparent difficulty, a smouldering fire in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed, desperately controlling himself. "No,

of course I know you would prefer not to take my money; of course you don't wish to be paid—to be dishonored, to step down from your pedestal of superiority. But if you have the slightest feeling for the position I am in you will accept it without a word. Can't you realize that I want to feel I owe you nothing, that whatever obligation there is has been met and settled and paid for? Don't you see," he burst out—"don't you see that you will degrade yourself to my level?"

Jasper remained silent. It seemed a dreadful thing to take money—Yarborough's money—her husband's money! And yet was he to remain, in defiance of this superb piece of quixotism, on what Yarborough called his pedestal of superiority?—to shame to the end this man on whom he had already inflicted so ineffaceable an injury?

Yarborough still stared at him.

"You will take it," he said. "You must take it!"

Jasper bowed his head.

"I am in your hands," he said.

Yarborough turned again to the table. He was a methodical man; he had been trained in an office like any clerk, though the inheritor of millions; the blood of shrewd, sharp, careful traders coursed through his veins. Even in this hour, when all that had been the world to him was tumbling about his ears, the habit of a lifetime did not desert him. He wrote out the cheque, signed and blotted it, and marked on the stub the lessened balance at his banker's.

Jasper took the bit of paper and held it out before him. The touch of it seemed to soil his fingers.

"You have made it out for five thousand dollars!" he said.

"Money is all I have left now," said Yarborough—"money, money, money!"

Then he walked unsteadily up and down the room several times and finally collapsed into a chair.

"Call somebody," he said; "I believe I am going to faint."

Jasper ran to the door, and almost fell into the doctor's arms.

"Ah," said the great man, looking curiously from him to Yarborough, "so the strain is telling on him at last, is it? As for you," he went on, "Mr. Jasper What-ever-your-name-is, the sooner you are out of this house the better for all concerned."

"I may tell you that she is dead," he added.



AT THE SIGN OF THE DIAL

I TRIED to make a trade with Time—
A sordid Shylock he;
With plea and prayer I spake him fair,
Yet we could not agree.

I offered him a hundred days—
Long days from sun to dew—
All his for aye for just one day,
One little day *with you*.

Alas! he smiled and shook his head;
In grief I cried, "Good sir,
I'll raise the score a hundred more
For just one hour with her."

Ah me, our bargain came to naught!
Too wise is Time, I hold.
Not his the loss to sell for dross
His most refined gold.

JOHN WINWOOD.



SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION

HE (*who has been refused a kiss*)—It used to be an easy matter to kiss you. What has come over you?

SHE—My doctor told me I must take more exercise.



WHY LOVE IS BLIND

LEST Love should grow too earthy to aspire,
His eyes were blinded by his pure desire;
His wings were woven of the down of dreams,
His arrows tempered in the sacred fire.

ELSA BARKER.

THE QUEEN OF THE FAR COUNTRY

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky

"I AM a queen," she said, as she idly wove laurel leaves into a coronal. He looked up. "Yes, a queen," she continued, "the queen of the Far Country. You have heard of the Far Country, how beautiful it is and how great? There is no one unhappy in the Far Country—all is happiness and laughter and love. They say it is a heaven on earth. But they took me away, why I know not, and here I am a prisoner. I sometimes think some malevolent king has caused me to be deposed from my throne so that he may rule my beautiful country." She continued to industriously weave her coronal. Her fingers were most exquisite, and were made fairer by the contrast with the dark green of the laurels.

"I," he said, sighing, looking at the ground, "am nothing. I am without a past. They tell me that once, not a year ago, I was a great nobleman in the White Empire of the Tsar. I do not remember it, but if they say so, it must be true. Now I am a child and am growing up again."

She who had been a queen shut her eyes and sighed softly. He who was nothing glanced at her with more than passing interest. It was their first meeting—a meeting in a spot as ideal as any that could be found in the Far Country. The two were seated on a bench of antique white marble, where rose wreaths were twined in fantasy around the leering heads of satyrs. At a distance could be seen the sheen and glimmer of the ever-beautiful Mediterranean. The soft winds of the Southern Spring coquetted with the broad leaves of the palms that arched over the white bench.

"Oh, queen, live forever!" said he, using the beautiful salutation of the East, "and deign to look upon me as your most humble subject."

She opened her glorious eyes. Her lips parted in a smile of pleasure. Her slender fingers dallied with the laurel crown.

"Kneel," she said, and he knelt, for though her voice was a caress, it was also a command. Then she placed the laurel crown on his head.

"Rise," she said, softly, "rise, you whom I have crowned Lord of My Heart."

He rose, crowned, prisoning her slender hands in his and bestowing on her finger tips the homage of a kiss.

The presence of a woman came between them. She was quietly dressed. She curtsied respectfully to her who was the queen and said, in a low voice:

"Your majesty, it is time for you to dress for the afternoon."

The queen smiled with a strange sweetness that sent the mad blood to the man's heart. She held out her hand to him. "Until later," she said, as he kissed her hand again.

Then she went away and left the man alone. He went back to the bench and threw himself upon it. An inexpressible languor came over him, and he found himself remembering the beauty of the queen.

"Poor, mad beauty!" he sighed, for he had forgotten the wreck of his own mind.

"That poor man has lost his memory, they say," said the queen to the attendant.

The gentle attendant nodded gravely. "He was a great noble-

man—a Count Wassalae-Zolvesgo—in the White Empire of the Tsar. But sickness came upon him, and, robber-like, took his brilliant mind away. Now he is little better than a child."

The queen nodded, then smiled. "There is no love as great as that of a child," she said. But the attendant understood not.

They met often on the antique bench beneath the palm tree. She who had been a queen became in verity the queen of all to him whose past was blotted out. Then came a night when he crept out to meet her there, and her pure, sweet face was upturned to his while he kissed her many times. Only the stars saw and the winds heard.

"My queen of queens," he said.

"My lord," she answered him.

The madness of their minds made love all the sweeter. It was mystical, with a strange, cloying sweetness that love could never have out in the world of busy minds and active bodies. But the queen thought, as he caressed her: "Poor man, he is no better than a child, while I, I am the queen of the Far Country." And the man thought, though his pulse throbbed and sobbed with the tenseness of his love: "Poor, mad queen! Adored though she is, the day must come when I will once more be myself, and she will still be only the mad lady."

At last, one night, when the queen sat on the veranda, singing quaint songs of her native land and accompanying them on a guitar, the man said to her:

"To-morrow I go away, far and far away. To-night is our last night together." For the man's mind had returned to him.

"Though you go to the ends of the earth," she said, "you are mine, mine forever. Did I not crown you Lord of My Heart, and have I not given my soul into your hands for keeping forever?"

"Yes, beloved," he murmured, softly, taking her slender hands in his.

They sat there far into the night, while the attendant in the chair behind them slumbered softly, as was her wont. One by one the lights in the villas near by went out. From the gardens came the odor of roses and lilies, while the heavy scent of the jasmine clung to them like a heavy, subtle garment.

"Oh, my love!" he whispered.

"Dear, dear love!" she answered.

Behind them, in the casement of a window, stood the great mind specialist who had them in charge.

"It is strange," he mused, "that these two poor, unsettled minds can love. They know not that he is married and that she is the fiancée of a lover who'll not give her up in spite of her madness."

When the morning came a carriage drove to the door of the villa, and the man's brother descended.

"Come, Vladimir," he said, taking the man by the arm after they had exchanged an affectionate greeting. As he entered the carriage, a slight, graceful form came out on an upper balcony. The glorious gold-brown hair was artistically dressed, and its sole ornament was a passionate jasmine flower. Her delicate, virginal form was clad in a gown of white, clinging stuff that showed her every grace. She leaned over, tearing the jasmine from her hair.

"Good-bye, Lord of My Heart!" she cried, and threw him the flower.

"Good-bye, my queen!" the man answered, and gave back to her a look laden with love.

Magnificent sleighs, drawn by beautiful Orloff horses, dashed up to a palace on the Quai de la Cour. Men and women of rank descended and passed through the three vestibules, whose doors were opened and closed by servants clad in the well-known Zatchkine liveries. From the great ballroom came the soft sound of dance music.

"It is a great fête," said a Moscow Prince to a Countess from Tiflis.

"The Princess Zatchkine is overjoyed that her nephew, the Count

Vladimir, has returned from his travels in foreign lands," answered the Countess, dropping her hand by her side, so that, shielded by her dress, the Moscow Prince might catch and hold it. The Countess from Tiflis—her mother was a Circassian—half closed her eyes and parted her lips in a warm, languorous smile. Then she rose suddenly and pressed forward to meet the Princess Zatchkine, who was coming toward her.

"Vladimir Othonovitch looks like a king to-night," said the Countess.

"Yes, Sophie Romanovna," answered the Princess, "he is a king to-night. For I shall announce him as my heir."

"Happy he must be, indeed," murmured Sophie Romanovna, for the Princess Zatchkine was worth more millions of roubles than one can imagine. She was an old maid, whose love was divided between her big nephew and fine French brandy. The Princess passed on, leaving behind her the aroma of cognac.

"I would not be as ugly as she is for all her millions of roubles," said Sophie Romanovna.

"Blessed be God," said the Moscow Prince, "that you are the most beautiful woman in all the world."

"Save one," said the Countess.

"Save one!" echoed the Prince.

"You are jesting, Sophie Romanovna."

"I am not, indeed, for the Frenchwoman, the Baroness Natalie de Bergeyck, is far more beautiful than I," said the Tiflis Countess, and her air was that of profound conviction.

"Nay, nay," said the Prince, though he knew in his heart that he thought the Baroness more beautiful, "you are the most beautiful woman in the world."

"Speak of the Evil One," said the Countess, as she crossed her forefingers. For there, crossing the room, was the Baroness Natalie. She was clad in a robe of cream crêpe and leaned on the arm of her uncle, the French Ambassador to Russia. She was more beautiful than one can imagine, and her glossy hair was

crowned with a coronet of jasmine blossoms.

"What ails you, Vladimir Othonovitch?" asked his aunt, as the Baroness Natalie slowly crossed to where they stood.

"It is nothing," he said, smiling, and stroking the scrawny hand of the Princess Zatchkine. The French Ambassador and his niece reached them, and there was a formal introduction. The Princess and the Ambassador moved off in company.

Olga Feodorovna, the last of the great Russ house of Zatchkine, would not have gone away and left these two alone had she known some things. But Olga Feodorovna was not gifted with second sight, and the Petersburg gossips did not know of the time that Vladimir Othonovitch had spent at the Villa la Lune, where the great German specialist, Zornberg, adjusts the delicate mechanisms of minds that are out of order.

"It is near to the ends of the earth, my queen," said the Lord of Her Heart.

"Near unto the ends of the earth," repeated the queen, raising her hand to see if the jasmine coronet was in its place.

"What have you done with my soul, Lord of My Heart?" she asked, raising her eyes that she might look into his.

"I have it close," he answered, smiling radiantly.

"Oh, my love!" she sighed, softly.

"Dear, dear love!" he answered her.

"Her Excellency, the Princess, begs you to come to her," said a lackey in the man's ear.

"What Excellency, what Princess?" asked he, wonderingly.

"I am the Queen of the Far Country," said the woman, winding her arms around his neck and caressing him softly.

"A peculiar case has just occurred," wrote the mind specialist to his brother in Berlin. "Last Spring I discharged two cases as cured. They were a man and a woman, their de-

partures being about a month apart. They had shown a decided liking for each other's company while here, which I encouraged. Four months after the woman left they met in the salon of the man's aunt in Russia, and a complete return of mental disarrangement took place in each. The two, while here, had conceived such a violent passion for each other that the mere sight of the other sufficed to un-

balance their minds. Both have been returned here within the past month and are again under my care. They are completely separated; in fact, neither knows of the other's presence. However, the infatuation seems to grow worse for the separation, and I fear that they will become violent if they are not allowed to see each other again. It may become necessary for me to reunite them."



A SUMMER IDYL

HOW sweet it is to sit upon the bank,
 And lure the wary crab I dimly see
 Unto the surface, kicking wildly free,
 Gently, while giving to the line no yank!
 To watch him pirouette and sprawl and prank
 Amid the seaweed's dainty drapery,
 Then plunge the net and, writhing, hold in fee
 This thing that's fit the finest feast to flank.

At such a time, transported in a high
 Olympian dream, as known to gods of old,
 I lie in peace upon a thornless bed
 Of peerless roses, and most fondly sigh:
 "Ever will I, by perfect joy controlled,
 Look on the juicy crab when he is red."

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.



HIS JUST DUE

SPATTERED SPOONER (*at the door*)—Madam, I am one of de deservin' poor dat you read about, and—

MRS. FLINT (*grimly*)—Yes, judging from your looks you certainly deserve to be poor.



ADMIRABLE SELF-RESTRAINT

TEACHER—Johnny! Johnny! It is very wrong for you to say such a thing about one of your young playmates.

JOHNNY THICKNECK—Huh! That ain't half as bad as what I ain't sayin' about him.

UNDERBRUSH

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

I COULD just catch sight of my maid's white profile against the dim tree-trunks and hear through the rustle of the forest leaves the deep sighs of my husband's valet—the sighs of a full stomach and an empty brain. Biggs had been left to me as a legacy while his master went off for a week's rough camping with guides and dogs to the mountains. "I can't stand Biggs," he had said; "he's no good on such trips. I leave him to look after you and Augustine and will pick you all up again next Monday at the South Lake."

No sooner was I left alone in the glare of electricity and blare of broken wind instruments, amid the tramp, tramp of wayward feet on the damp or sun-baked hotel piazzas, than an anguish of longing for stillness and shadow, for what I had come to find and failed to attain, grasped my heart. I had vaguely heard of the quaint tryst of hunters fifteen miles away in the wold, and had been told by returning travelers that, although primitive, it was clean and even dainty because of its owner's pronounced reputation for refinement. In fact, I had been informed that this host of the forest was a gentleman by birth and education and was fastidious as to whom he entertained. He had been known to turn away, in brutal fashion, persons whose appearance or manners did not please him. Persons who make their access difficult are those who feel themselves capable of being won. A certain wish to investigate this autocrat of the underbrush, mingled with detestation of my present environment, pushed me to order my boxes packed.

We were almost there. My spirits rose with the sense of novelty, while the murmurs in the tree tops, the crackling of dead boughs, the smell of the warm verdure nourished with rich moisture in which our wheels sank, added their quota of mystery and promise. As my spirits rose, however, I could feel that my servants' fell. That strange peace which the voices of nature cast across the drifting currents of a restless heart seemed only to disturb and oppress them. I felt the discordant jar that the presence of unresponsive human creatures brings to such a feast. I turned my attention from my maid's sharply outlined, discontented little nose and from the oft-repeated *soupirs* of the wondering man behind, who evidently thought Madam daft or wicked to leave light and comfort for such wilds. I addressed myself to the driver.

"Isn't there some romance about this Mr. Ingen?" I asked him, bending forward to catch his answer, which the creak of the rickety mountain wagon rendered indistinct.

"Well, now," said he, flicking a fly from his horse's flank, "if there be, I ain't acquainted with its details. I'm some of a stranger here. I live on the North Lakes. I took a hand here this year for August 'cause Joe Town that drove this yere team's laid up with the rheumatiz and they're scarce o' hands over to Tahoussa's. Seems now, though, as if I'd heerd as Ingen come here after misfortune. Some of his folks died, I guess; mebbe 'twas his girl, the young lady as he was a-goin' ter marry. Guess that wor it. He's a good man, though. I see him reg'lar every Monday when we

squares our little accounts. Folks say he's a crank, but I allays found him reasonable. He seems to be one of them fellers that ain't sharp after money." He turned and met my eyes with a twinkle in his shrewd gray ones. "There's them as think that a sign of being cracked. Mebbe 'tis."

I had already concluded Ingen to be a man of imagination. Shallow intellects whose perceptive faculties are obtuse necessarily decide that such a one must be shiftless. These are given over to generalizations which conclude that a man of learning must be physically dirty, an actress dissolute, a woman of fashion neglectful of domestic duties, persons of talent devoid of common sense, clergymen emotional. To divide humanity coarsely into types saves time and energy. Our Jehu urged his tired nags with a prod of the whip down a steep inclination, swinging across a shambling bridge that spanned the turbulence of a black torrent. After we had passed it, he said: "I have heerd tell as he declined ninety thousand for his property one of them Chicago millionaires offered, but I couldn't swear as that's true."

A poor man who refuses ninety thousand dollars for—anything, is such a unique creature that my curiosity was yet more keenly whetted. The story was piquant even if apocryphal. Mr. Ingen appeared to me encircled by a nimbus of new interest. A man who did not care for or want money, who hid himself in the woods with a mind superior to the ducat! It was worth a fifteen-mile jolt to get a look at him!

It was two days later that he himself told me his story. A trite enough little tale as to facts, hardly unusual, yet certainly not modern. The few guests had gone to their rooms frightened by the night's chill. I had lingered on the porch, fascinated, drawing in with joy deep breaths of the clear, cold night.

I can see him as he leaned on the railing, his back to the great fire that burned in the road below us,

his face to the moon. I was glad we knew nothing about each other, that this first meeting would doubtless be the last. There would never come between his soul and mine that coldness of the second phase, when each would have had time to know the other's friends, and thus be warned of the other's faults! I should never be told he was a sickly sentimentalist; he would never be informed that I—but one must not criminate one's self. I found in him none of the vanity of the recluse, of the eccentric to whom one can never say the right word. He had none of that monstrous egotism of the man who understands existence differently from his fellow men; and although he talked of himself, I absolved him from over-much self-love. For an hour of life our souls understood each other, and I am ingenuous enough to believe that he did not tell his story often; nay, I will even go so far as to say that it did not have the ring of an oft-repeated experience. It was rather wrong from him by my eager and earnest sympathy.

"Were you not about to be married? Did not your *fiancée* die?" I had asked him, rather courageously.

"No, she was never that. I will tell you," he replied, looking up at me with his small, *triste* brown eyes. His figure was what Augustine would have called *chétif*, and the rough leather suit and leggings in which it was clothed barely gave it size and dignity. He was a little man with a delicate, irregular face, yet there was something in his manner and address which woke respect. What it was could with difficulty be defined. Perhaps it was the force of the being who wants nothing.

"No, she was not that."

"Then . . . ?"

"We were of the same party, near here, on the South Lake. She was a French Canadian. I had never known her or her family. She was very talented; to me she seemed very beautiful. Our fancy never sleeps for those we love. We forever belittle or deify them. But when I make of her at will

goddess or Madonna, I *know* she is one. We wandered together through the mountains. One day from Mount Cyprienne—"I named it after her, that was her name; do you find it pretty?—through my glass we spied this little lake, this wilderness. She fancied it. We sat down on a ledge of rock and planned . . . this house. How we would build it near the water, all of logs, with wings and turrets just as it stands to-day, and laughingly she told me we should live here, away from all the world. It was only for fun, you see, because when I asked her hand two weeks later she told me she was engaged to another man; that she disliked him, but that he was rich and her father desired she should marry him."

"Had she been an American girl she would have let her papa go to the devil," I answered, hotly.

"Well, you see she was not. She was trained to obedience. She dared not flout him. She told me he was a strong man and severe, but I think he must have been very weak. It is only weak men who torture women; they like to show their power; strong ones who have intelligence use it in other channels."

"You think it takes intelligence to torture?" I asked, smiling.

"Yes," he said, "but strong people scorn to use such weapons; they would rather let them rust. I have known men torment the beauty out of a woman, the beauty that made her dear. Do they not know that to make her happy is to nurture it?" He paused and took off his cap. "Well, we parted." His lips twitched. "But you see, I could not live without her. I heard she was stopping with some relatives in Boston. I went there; she had just left them. Two days later I read of her in the papers. It made some noise at the time. On her way back to Toronto she went to the Falls. She was last seen on Goat Island. They found her hat and book . . ."

"She loved you, then?"

"I have no right to say so."

"But why kill herself? How terrible!"

His sad eyes wandered to Mount Cyprienne's shadowy summit. "Yes."

"Not a word? . . . not a message?"

"Nothing."

"Absolute silence?"

"Silence."

"Her parents . . . ?"

"Were frantic. Her father traveled to New York to see me. I was living there then. I was in business, a young fellow. I left the city not to meet him. He would not have been safe with me. *I was afraid!*" He seemed to grow in stature, while a strange sternness gathered on his mouth.

"You never saw him?"

"Never! He went back to the home he had made desolate."

There was a pause. I tried to speak, but somehow I could not. By-and-bye he went on: "I believe her father was in business difficulties. I have tried since to judge him less harshly, to make some excuse; we all grope in the fog. He had felt the furious hostility of a dominant temper before resistance. They could not forever take her from me, after all. Some day, somewhere, I feel that I shall find her. As soon as I had scraped up enough money I came here. I bought the mountain and called it by her name. I bought the lake. I built the house as we had planned it together on the warm evening long ago. I opened this road. It cost less then than now; land was cheap and labor almost given away. I lived here alone and was happy, after a fashion."

"And now?"

"Well, my family interfered. I have a married sister. She said I would go mad if I saw no one; so, to please her, I open my doors to those who care to come. It is but a few. It is too lonely for them here. What they pay me helps me keep the place. 'Society ought to be the best expression of humanity. One of these days it will be.' 'With one man I walk among the stars, while another pins me to the wall.' On these two quotations, one a prophecy, the other a

platitude, a clever writer of to-day builds up a fabric of baseless hopes. The prophecy is void, for the prophet did not know the meaning of the word 'society;' few who write of it do. The platitude, albeit in Emerson's best manner, does not bear on the subject. The 'stars' have nothing to do with an organization that is not moral, not meditative. I doubt if the best and most starry emotions are found in the world, and those who look for anything more than amusement in society will find disappointment. I chose my solitude. I am content."

"And this solitude is your tribute to the past?" I asked.

"Call it so if you will," he continued, in a low tone. "I thought of putting up a marble mausoleum to her. She has no burial place. Her beautiful, dear body was never found. But I feared intruders, the vulgar tourists, the desecration of their tread." He once more looked up to the height. "The mountain is her monument," he said.

"And the rich man who was to have married her?" I felt ashamed of my inquisitiveness.

He smiled. "It is strange you should ask me of him. I never saw him but once, and that was only a year ago."

"And . . . ?"

"Oh, he is one of your millionaires; his wife is a woman of fashion."

"Ah!"

"I am something of an inventor. I went last year into the office of a New York lawyer about a patent of mine, and there . . . I met him."

"Ah!" I again uttered.

"Yes, he was introduced to me. He shook my hand. He had never, I felt certain, heard my name; at any rate, he had forgotten it. But I knew his. His name had always been branded on my soul."

My interest was almost painful. I came down the rickety steps to miss no word. I stood close to him in the lurid heat of the pine boughs. He laughed.

"He was stout and florid, an ordinary man—think of it!—and good-natured enough. It was even difficult to dislike him much."

"And you really refused all that lot of money for this place?" I said, drawing my furs about my throat and looking about, trying to speak more lightly.

"Yes. I am not a cheat. It is not worth the half they offered, except to me. I didn't care to clinch with the fancy of a Chicago pork-packer's foolish wife, who would have wearied of her caprice the following season and sold out to some tavern keeper for a farthing. I don't care for money; I hate it. It killed my poor love. I have lived here twenty years; she was . . . lost on September 14, 1876. To me it seems but yesterday, and yet it is twenty years. . . ."

"You prefer . . . ?"

"My memories."

I pulled my lorgnon from its snug place in my belt and took a long stare at him. His voice had sunk to silence. It is odd that world-baffled veterans, who have themselves drifted from serene ideals, reverence them in others. The faltering wish their friends to be stable and virtuous. The faithless worship fidelity.

"Good-night," I said, and gave him my hand. He held it for a moment in his own.

"Good-night."

The logs rolled over; a gust blew from the wilderness; the sparks blazed for a moment and then sank; the moon veiled her face. Someone called his name. He bowed and went into the house. I was left alone. The lake was but a few paces from the house. It lay like a pearl on the dark earth, glimmering, quiet, deep. I raised my skirts and picked my way over the treacherous, twining roots and the soft carpet of pine needles to its shore. I gazed into its wan water and then up at the cloud-bathed altitudes. I seemed to listen for the girl's whisper near my cheek, to feel her cold sigh on my heart. I shuddered at a fluttering leaf that fell on my wrist as at the touch of her dead

finger. A movement in the brush sounded like the tread of her light footstep. A profound melancholy clutched me. I came back, pushing my way with difficulty through the thicket of young evergreens. I felt myself importunate. I seemed to have disturbed their peace. The fire

was out. The spent flame had left but a feeble glow. I went to my rooms.

"*Comme Madame est pâle!*" said Augustine, as she unloosed my cloak, and Biggs, bringing my lamp, hearing her words, asked if this damp hole was making Madam ill.



TWO LULLABIES

THE paint was cracked on the doll-baby's face
 And the rumpled hair would not curl,
 But with motherly kindness she saw only grace—
 The dear little mite of a girl;
 She had no shoes for the bare, broken feet,
 But the Rockaby Lady came near
 When the little Child-Woman, so sleepily sweet,
 Sang: "Lullaby, lullaby, dear!"

There were pitiful scars on the little boy's face,
 But she found a beauty somewhere,
 And the woman's heart broke when she saw the dim place
 Where they laid him to sleep with a prayer;
 But still there's a song in the hush of the night,
 For the angels come down very near
 And with fingers of rest on the Child-Woman's sight
 Sing: "Lullaby, lullaby, dear!"

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



DYNAMITE DIPLOMACY

GLADYS BLOOM (*archly*)—Now, just for instance guess how old I am.
 CLEVERTON (*diplomatically*)—I don't know; but you do not look it.



INFELICITOUS INQUISITIVENESS

MAMMA (*reciting the familiar rhyme*)—"Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard, to get her poor dog a bone—"
 LITTLE PERCY (*who has overheard something*)—Ma, did she have a skeleton in her closet, too?

L. of C.

+ FADETTE—NEW ORLEANS

FADETTE, you little coquette, sweet sinner and saint in one,
 Are you there in New Orleans yet, and what have your wiles not done?
 Have you still the power to disarm with a glance of those eyes like stars?
 And whom does your voice now charm, with its pretty contempt for r's?
 Dear nights that were made for love, when everything else was vain,
 With a glorious moon above reflected on Pontchartrain!
 Ah, me! There are things a man would better perhaps forget,
 But who that has met you *can* forget you, little Fadette?

Some people, I know, Fadette, would never approve of you,
 Though smoking a cigarette is the wickedest thing you do;
 But in that nonchalant pose a virtue is born of vice,
 And pardon would come, God knows, from even the ultra-nice!
 Languorous, half-closed eyes and dreamily parted lips,
 And seen in the wreaths that rise, a mirage of fairy ships,
 With shimmering, sunlit sails by nicotined fingers set
 For seas where the bitter gales would wreck them, little Fadette!

Laughter and love a-whirl to the popping of champagne corks;
 Few cities have charms, my girl, compared with gay New York's;
 But some are the charms that cloy, and some are the charms that pall,
 Till under a mask of joy the saddest of tears may fall.
 You picture existence here one round of your Mardi Gras,
 But how you would weary, dear, of the follies and shams you saw;
 And what would Canal street do if ever you left, my pet?
 Why, you'd take away with you all its sunshine, little Fadette!

Ah, little daughter of Eve, your beauty would thrill Broadway,
 But the roses would surely grieve forsaken by you a day;
 Dream, little one, if you will, of Fortunate Isles afar,
 But here, where the winds are chill, you would droop like the flower you are!
 And so it was best, I know, that under your Southern sky,
 We buried love long ago, and whispered a fond good-bye—
 Best that my lips were dumb to the look in your eyes, and yet
 Ah, how my heart says "Come—yes, come to me, little Fadette!"

MALCOLM DOUGLAS.

+ SUCH A MONEY SAVER!

COBWIGGER—Things are invented as we need them.

MERRITT—I don't know about that. I'd be much better off if somebody had years ago invented a horseless race track.

THE TRANSMOGRIFICATION OF DAN

By H. J. W. Dam

IT was a somewhat unusual state of affairs which arose in the good city of San Francisco through the marriage of Mr. Daniel Pinney and Miss Mabel Van Ness.

Mrs. Van Ness, the mother, was a very proud woman who had long been the unquestioned leader of local society. She was born a Wormley of Virginia and had married a Van Ness of Kentucky. This meant, in the view of Mrs. Van Ness, that heredity and the right of social predominance had found its last and highest expression in herself and her daughter. Unfortunately, the Van Ness of Kentucky who had builded her a magnificent mansion and lavishly supplied her with money during his lifetime failed to leave her a penny when he died. The mansion, in addition to its other elaborate decorations, had a mortgage of one hundred thousand dollars. It was visibly evident that a Wormley of Virginia who had married a Van Ness of Kentucky could not live in a thousand-dollar cottage in the barbaric waste of the suburbs. Also that her offspring was never intended by Providence to give music lessons or to instruct unripe young persons in the art of speaking French badly. It was her instant conclusion—a conclusion which grew in strength daily—that the mansion and appearances must be kept up till Mabel could marry something that would pay the bills. Mabel rose in her might at this suggestion and talked of pure love and Navy officers, until a few tremendous unpaid accounts came from the shops on the principal thoroughfares. Then Mabel, being her mother's own child, quickly ac-

quiesced and was ready to marry not only something, but anything.

The most eligible among the things that offered was Mr. Daniel Pinney. Dan and Joe Pinney were miners, rich to the degree that people of ordinary means or no means at all describe as "sickening." They were worth at least ten million dollars between them, and one of their mines alone was yielding them a hundred thousand dollars in gold per month. Of the two, Dan Pinney was a matrimonial possibility. Since he became rich he had adopted the garb of the dwellers in cities, dressed like a gentleman and had aspirations to be like those of his kind who were mentioned in the court circular, the same being the society columns of the Sunday editions of the daily newspapers. Joe Pinney, on the other hand, was altogether impossible. He was a big, burly, black-bearded giant who stuck tenaciously to a wide-awake felt hat and a pea-jacket. On state occasions he wore a frock coat and a silk hat, but these were extremely rare, and were looked forward to, like a visit to the dentist's, with disquiet and unrest. He had once, in a burst of carelessness, ordered a dress suit. He tried it on, with all its correlated adornments, alone in front of a mirror. He looked himself up and down in shame and self-contempt and said—what it would be an error in taste to repeat. He was a man of hasty impulse and unguarded speech. He never wore it again.

The marriage took place in the Church of Holy Grace. Mabel said, "I take thee, Daniel, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold

from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish and obey till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance, and thereto I give thee my troth." Dan said very much the same thing. The only difference between them was that Dan meant it.

About a month afterward there was a meeting of indignation and incredulity in the marble-floored bar-room of the Palace Hotel. Joe was chief spokesman. The others were Baldy Hayford, Jake Weed, Jim Mulholland and Abe Macey. They were all very rich miners and had been the firmest and most trusted friends of Dan since the year of the hegira, 1849. They all wore wide-awake black hats and pea-jackets, and contempt for a dude and his effeminate fineries robbed them as a garment.

"What did you say?" said Baldy Hayford, starting forward, incredulous.

"She's made him singe all the hair off'n the back of his hands," said Joe.

They looked at each other in grave wonder. Then they looked at the backs of their own hands, all hairy, all covered with the evidence of exposure to the elements and honest toil.

"Ef the Lord Almighty put the hair there, seems to me she's some'at supercilious," said Baldy.

This view was generally upheld.

There was silence in the group. They were all fond of Dan. The associations of years, the friendship that has been born of common hardship and the respect that has been born of thorough knowledge make strong sympathies.

"It's the old story," said Baldy. "A woman kin make a fool of any man if he gits mashed on her. The better the man the easier a woman can turn him into putty. Barkeep, set 'em up."

The barkeep set 'em up.

"Here's hopin' that Dan'll come out on top an' boss the show, mother-in-law included," said Baldy.

Now, strange to say, Mrs. Van

Ness and her daughter and her social circle were as dissatisfied with Dan in his new capacity as were his life-long friends, the miners.

Externally he did very well. He was a man of forty-two, of middle height and slender frame. He was dark, wiry, and his flesh was as hard as a baseball. His hands and feet were slender, nervous and well shaped. He shaved off his black beard shortly after he was accepted as Mabel's future husband, and with a curling black mustache showing only a few white hairs, and his dark, quiet eyes and black, curly hair he looked even aristocratic. He was a very quiet, reserved man of great dignity, shrewdness and power when among men. But his knowledge of the infinite trifles that make up good manners in the world of good form was near the absolute minimum. In the arena of big things, finance, mines and great markets he was at home. In the world of small things, society, he felt out of place and conscious that he was ridiculous.

They had returned from their bridal tour and had been given a dinner by representatives of the cream of the social cream, Dan being made to feel at every moment that he was an unspeakable kind of skimmed milk.

The next morning there was a war talk at the mansion. Mrs. Van Ness was haughty, weary and disgusted. Mabel was annoyed and frowning. Dan was sheepish. He had no dignity. It must be remembered that he was strangely, idolatrously in love with his wife.

"It must never occur again," said Mrs. Van Ness. "We cannot be made ridiculous." She really felt cut to the heart over the dinner. Dan had paid off the mortgage and settled half a million on Mabel, and there was no reason why the natural feelings of a Wormley should longer be repressed. They had been afraid to teach Dan before this, but his time had now come.

"How could you!" said Mabel, ready to cry.

"What did I do?" asked Dan, humbly.

"What didn't you do! Heavens!" said Mabel.

"Soup is not the elixir of life," said Mrs. Van Ness.

"Were you panning it out for gold?" asked Mabel. "You tipped up your plate and took the last precious drop."

"If I may make a suggestion," said Mrs. Van Ness, "when you have finished a course your knife and fork should be laid on your plate side by side. To leave them touching each other in the centre and extending up and down the table in a straight line is symmetrical, but it is not customary."

Dan's guilty mind saw a giant knife and fork running the whole length of a horrified table.

"I—I ain't much accustomed——"

"Don't say 'ain't,'" snapped Mabel.

"I am not much accustomed——"

"We know that very well," said Mrs. Van Ness, "and for your own sake, as well as ours, will do all we can to polish you. It will be well to bear in mind that conversation is carried on with difficulty when the mouth is filled with food. There is danger that your ideas, however valuable, may be mingled in their expression with fragments of salmon or escaping green peas."

Poor Dan inwardly shrank. He saw himself as a conversational machine-gun bombarding the cream of the cream with uncooked ideas and unmasticated vegetables.

Among the other derelictions of the moment it appeared that he had taken the wrong seat in the carriage; had shaken hands when he should not and failed to shake when he should; had given the wrong arm to the lady whom he took in to dinner; had been a bull in the china shop of table etiquette during the entire progress of the dinner; had intruded a New England vernacular into the holy temple of English grammar; had drunk much too much wine; had told a story which had been met with silence that could

be heard and which nearly gave the English butler, who repressed his mirth, an epileptic fit; had failed to rise when the ladies left the table; had failed to open the door for their hostess when she left him in the drawing-room, and had been wanting in so many other ways that their enumeration revealed a power of observation and memory in his wife and his mother-in-law which, under other circumstances, would have commanded his surprise and admiration.

"Yes, I know it," said Dan, sadly.

"Give me a little time, dear. You won't be ashamed of me."

During this whole scene the man had appeared weak, humble and undignified. When, in the presence of two women sore with indignation, he attempted to treat some matters jocularly he was even silly. They felt an angry contempt for him, and they were scarcely to be blamed. If, as his brother Joe would have done, he had corrected Mabel as children are corrected and thrown her mother from the front balcony into the bedroom of the house opposite, he would have aroused their anger but would have won their respect. He was quite as determined a man as Joe, but a force was at work in him which made him seem weak and mean.

The effect on such a man as this of marrying such a wife as Mabel Van Ness may be imagined. She was beautiful, delicate, refined to the last degree. A slender, graceful girl of twenty whose figure was perfect in its symmetry, she, the woman whom God had permitted him to call "wife," was to him a being from a world he had never known. Her hair, said by her friends to be of slightly artificial tint, was to him a cloud of silken gold. Her delicate, flower-like face was to him the face of an angel. His life before his marriage had been the life of association with men; with women of no refinement; a life of rough hardships and rough pleasures. He had never known a home since he left the New England farm as a boy. A wanderer all his life, the words "home" and "wife" assumed a meaning and

had a power for him that was all the stronger because of their newness and strangeness. Robed in all the refinements and all the delicacies of modern dressmakers, set in a lordly mansion magnificently furnished, his wife seemed to him a sovereign and he a serf. His love for her was a mute idolatry. His position was that of an abject slave.

His wife, however, as far as he was concerned, was absolutely without any tender feeling. Her heart had never known a single throb of love for him, and his humility entrenched her in her pride, her vanity and her increasing dislike, her coming detestation of her husband. She had cared no more for him in marrying him than for a paving stone. Now the paving stone was ugly and she and her mother wished it out of their way.

In this altogether curious state of affairs the awkward thing happened. Although the natural consequence of matrimony, it created consternation indescribable. That Fate is a comedian has been said before.

Mabel told her mother. She told her with a heart filled with unimaginable disgust and despair. Mrs. Van Ness turned white, lifted her eyes to heaven and shivered with unmixed horror. The two women sat collapsed, like wretches about to be broken on the wheel. Suffice it to say that such a catastrophe had never been dreamed of by either.

There was once, in a book called "Our Mutual Friend," a wife named *Bella*, who, with brimming heart, spoke, hesitating, of the ships on the ocean and what they were bringing to her *John*. When she did so she changed a civil contract into a heavenly covenant; made a page of literature matchless and a pen immortal. Mabel, however, was not *Bella*, and Mrs. Van Ness was not *John*. The love that makes this secret of secrets a holy thing was not there. Instead of the smile from a blessing heaven it was very like the curse of a bitter hell.

Mother and daughter were agreed upon several points. In one they were as firm as iron. Dan should

not be told. It would prevent the divorce.

And Dan was not told.

Dan thought, at this time, that he was getting on famously. He had bought the "Rules of Good Society," "Table Etiquette" and all the other small red volumes of the kind which could be secretly gleaned at book shops unobserved. His awkwardness and bad manners he knew to be a great and painful annoyance to his wife, but he smiled in secret. He had mastered great problems in his life, and he knew he could conquer this little one. He improved daily and rapidly. Love is a famous school-mistress. But unfortunately the improvement passed all unnoticed. So with his speech. He had started life with a common school training, but beyond that he had never enjoyed any other education than that which is most valuable—acquiring knowledge of life, of men and of himself. He began to weed his conversational garden of "ain't," "s'posin'," "nothin'" and the other indigenous products of the New England farm. There was once a retired bootmaker who had a perfectly kept greenhouse and lawn. These were his first care in life, and he lay awake nights to think of them. If anyone, in lighting a cigarette, threw a wax match on that lawn, he frowned with a twinge of pain; he could not help it. This was the way Dan came to feel whenever he thoughtlessly threw an "ain't" into his own conversation.

But his wife's failure to observe, her increasing capriciousness and annoyance at his presence, now began to make their impression. He had at first taken his wife's love for granted. Little by little the scales began to drop from his eyes. He commenced to doubt that she loved him very deeply, then to fear that she loved him not at all. This was hard to believe and difficult to accept.

One evening, while following her into the dining-room, he stepped on her train. It stopped her with a sharp jerk and ripped the waist seam slightly.

"I beg pardon."

"Beg pardon!" she said, trembling with quick, contemptuous anger born of her condition. "Are you going to beg pardon all your life long?"

"I wouldn't get angry. It was a little thing, dear."

"A little thing! Is it a little thing to be married to a dolt, a fool, an ass? Is it a little thing to burn with shame every hour, every moment of the day? Is it——?"

"My dear, my dear——" said Dan, soothingly.

"Don't you call me 'my dear'! Don't you speak to me! I hate you! I despise you! I never, never loved you——"

"Mabel, Mabel!" cried her mother. But Mabel was beyond control.

"I never loved you!" she hissed. "Never, never, never, not a teeny little bit——" she measured it on the tip of her little finger, before his face.

"I can't bear you! I can't breathe where you are! Oh, God! take him away, take him away! Oh, God! oh, God! Mother, mother!" She began to cry out in violent hysterics. Her mother seized her, but she slipped through her arms to the floor, and rolled and screamed wildly, frothing at the mouth. Her hair came down and enveloped her, tangling as she fought and struggled like a mad-woman.

Dan stood dumb and helpless. Her mother and a maid got her up stairs and into bed. The dinner table, brilliantly lighted, stood untouched for an hour. Dan, in crushed and wordless grief, sat bowed in one of the embossed leather chairs. Finally Mrs. Van Ness came down stairs.

"It must be apparent to you, Mr. Pinney, that your presence is a serious menace to my daughter's health."

"What's the matter with her?" he asked.

"She is far from well, and she is steadily getting worse. She is suffering from nervous prostration."

"Do you suggest that I leave the house?"

"For a time, yes. It will be better, believe me. She is a woman. Her

feelings control her. She cannot help them."

Dan sat thinking. There was a pause. He was sitting, she was standing, in violation of etiquette. This was the thought that occurred to her.

Dan spoke slowly, in a constrained, somewhat husky voice. "She said——" he stopped—"that she had never cared for me." He stopped again. "I should like to know if that is true."

"I cannot say as to that," said Mrs. Van Ness.

"Answer me." The words rang out like a pistol shot. The man's brow was set and his eyes gleamed dangerously.

Mrs. Van Ness was frightened. She felt the iron of his will. She was so utterly thrown off her guard that she did not know what to say.

"Is it true?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"I think we now understand each other," he said, quietly. He went up stairs, called his own servant, a mulatto, and ordered his trunks packed and taken to the Palace Hotel. Then he came down stairs, quietly put on his overcoat and hat and left the house.

Before his marriage he had occupied very sumptuous bachelor apartments on one of the fashionable thoroughfares. Into these he moved next day. His state, however, was now pitiful.

Joe, Baldy Hayford, Jake Weed, Jim Mulholland and Abe Macey welcomed him back with open arms. A banquet was held in celebration of the event at the Maison Dorée, at which, so history records, a breakdown was danced on the dinner table by Dan's hosts at 5 A.M.

Dan moved about in the old life and amid the old surroundings with a smile on his face and apparently in full sympathy with them. He wore the mask very well. But as the weeks and months passed he grew weary of it and dissembled with difficulty. He grew thin; he began to look painfully, unpleasantly weak and

white. The men observed this and talked it over.

"What is it, Joe?" they asked.

"He's done for!" said Joe, sadly.

"That yeller-haired cat has broke his heart."

And so indeed it seemed. Dan had given up. The mainspring of his life had been broken. To leave the wife and home that had filled his ideal of heaven; to know that his angel wife was a heartless hypocrite, a liar at the altar for money—it was too much. There was nothing left. More than once he thought to blow out his brains, but he could not bring himself to do so. He had a strong man's contempt for suicide as the refuge of the weak. His brawny nurses did their best, and did not do badly. Whatever fun was going, at whatever cost, was theirs and Dan's. Having sunk to a low vital plane, he seemed to stop there. He existed, weak and silent, but he got no worse. The months ran on.

Finally it was Baldy's birthday. He had sold a mine at a long price to a syndicate of English capitalists. It was believed in some quarters that the unprecedented banquet at the Maison Dorée which was to celebrate the double event would, before it finished, leave that excellent structure without any roof or upper floors. To keep Dan busy, and because he was the natural chairman, he was asked to preside. He would necessarily make a speech; therefore he would necessarily drink some champagne; therefore he would make more speeches and drink more champagne and "git a gait on him at last." It was well and subtly reasoned. They all thought more of cheering up Dan than of honoring Baldy.

The banquet came. There were about twenty guests, all men of position. Dan's speech was excellent, well chosen and perfectly and quietly said. He drank champagne and drank more, but it had no effect on him. The difference between Baldy's expected oration, which had been carefully prepared and studied for days, and the breezy, profane and

"Let her go, boys!" pronouncement with which he favored them was wide. "I've ben forgettin' it ever since I set down to the table," said Baldy. It was in the middle of his impromptu speech, about midnight and amid roars of applause that shook the building, that a waiter entered and went to Dan. Dan rose and went out unnoticed.

In the small room adjoining was the butler of Mrs. Van Ness in a dress suit and checked cloth cap, evidently seized hurriedly as he left the house.

"Mrs. Pinney is very dangerously ill, sir; she is calling for you."

Dan took hat and overcoat and called for a carriage. In a quarter of an hour he was at the door of the mansion. It was open. Confusion seemed to reign. The family doctor met him in the hall and beamed with professional pleasure. Dan looked at him, astonished.

"How is my wife?" he asked.

"Splendid. Couldn't be better."

Dan was completely puzzled.

"Then why—?"

"It's a boy," said the doctor.

"Mrs. Pinney has given birth to a son."

"Son?" said Dan, sharply, staring at him. "Whose son?"

The doctor laughed heartily. He had seen dazed fathers before, but never one so completely upset. "If there were any doubts in the matter the little fellow's eyes would settle them," he said, smiling.

Dan stood there motionless, like a man struck dumb. He could not realize the situation. Little by little, as minutes passed, he began to combine the source and sequence of events. The doctor returned and led him up stairs into his own bedroom. Dan was shown, on his own bed, a pillow bearing a child an hour old. The newly arrived personality was smacking its lips and hunting for something to eat with a most healthy energy and activity.

Dan bent low over the child. He saw his own black eyes look upward into his.

The lights grew suddenly dim. He

felt himself going, but gripped the rail of the bedstead and mastered the weakness. He looked about the room, at the doctor, the nurse and the child, like a man in a dream. Then without a word he drew up a chair, sat down by the bed and gazed fixedly at his son.

"You may see Mrs. Pinney now," said the doctor.

"No," said Dan. He scarcely thought of the doctor's remark or of his own answer. He sat staring at his son.

In his evening dress and overcoat all night long he watched by the side of his son. When his son was taken away, at his son's own emphatic request, for purposes of nourishment, Dan had the look of a cat robbed of her only kitten. When he was not staring at his son during this night he was thinking. A great change was taking place in him. The main-spring of human action is, after all, the heart. Emotions are all-powerful in creating energy or the lack of it. Dan was a man again for the first time since his marriage. Life had some meaning, and God existed, after all.

In the days that followed he paid no attention to his wife, other than that which the doctor requested. He saw her each day, was gentle, considerate and sympathetic. But he had no feeling for her. All the dammed-up love in the man's nature was going to the human trifle in pink ribbons and lace.

A month passed. His son required a nursery. Dan called his servant, the butler and the maids into the room at the east corner. It was the best bedroom in the house and had, therefore, always been that of Mrs. Van Ness. At his orders the servants moved out the furniture and moved in other things, including a cradle. It had been purchased by Dan and was an altogether royal cradle. It had taken the first prize at the late annual exhibition of home and other products.

"What on earth are you doing?" screamed Mrs. Van Ness.

"Can't you see?" asked Dan, as if surprised that she should ask.

"But where am I to sleep?" she cried.

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Dan.

His son grew and thrived. Dan was simply magnificent; there is no other word. He ruled his house with the power, the quiet, superb indifference of a king. He paid no more attention to anything that the two women did, said or wished than if they had been wax figures.

Mabel, now strong and well, was in a most perplexed condition. Things seemed to have twisted themselves into a new and incomprehensible combination, into a tangle of which she could get no unraveling thread. Here was she, there was her mother and there was Dan. But from being all in the house, she and her mother had become absolutely nothing. The aforesaid nothing, Dan, was now a great, strong man, polished, refined, curt, on occasions drily sarcastic, who treated her and her mother as if they did not really belong there, but remained on two weeks' notice, like the maids. She had a full mother's love for her child, and she found not the slightest difficulty in exaggerating it a little for Dan's benefit. This theatricism, however, made no impression on his calm.

Mabel, from the time of the child's birth, felt softened toward Dan with the softness of a wife who has borne him a child. Now she felt other things. Her former admiration for herself began to diminish daily. He treated her as a cipher, and she could not resist the impression that his view was to some extent correct. Mrs. Van Ness was equally perturbed. She was momentarily waiting the order for her to go. In addition, she was developing a grandmother's mad love for her first grandchild. She, too, was somewhat histrionic. It had no effect.

Mr. Daniel Pinney, millionaire, perfectly dressed, flawless in appearance and manners, crisp and elegant in his speech, went to his business office every morning. Every afternoon he drove out with his son and his son's

nurse in his son's luxurious landau behind his son's big bay horses. One evening, when his son was three months old, Mabel, who had donned that evening a gown that had cost much thinking and a great deal more money, but had nevertheless altogether failed of its purpose, burst suddenly into tears. She cried painfully, like a woman who suffers. Mrs. Van Ness looked on as reprovingly as she dared.

"What is the matter?" asked Dan.

"You don't—love—me—any more," wept Mabel.

"I love you as my wife, as the mother of my child. I shall always do that."

"But I want more," Mabel sobbed.

He stood looking at her in silence a long, long time; first sternly, then doubtfully, and finally with sudden tenderness.

He walked across the room and back again; and then, without a word and with tears in his own eyes, he took her in his arms.



BONDAGE

BOUND by traditions firm as fettered steel,
 She watched the gleaming dance of gypsies free,
 Asked tales of roamings over moor and lea,
 Of wild, strong life beneath the moon's white seal,
 And questioned why the blind, capricious wheel
 Of chance had cast her days a penalty—
 A round she hated—when from sea to sea
 The gypsies knew the joys she might not feel.

She twined a scarlet cloth about her head,
 Far out into the noiseless night she crept
 To seek the way that on to gladness led,
 Where in the dusk the tired wood-children slept—
 But sudden rose a claim from sheltered dead
 And turning back, she prayed for strength, and wept.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



NO TIME LOST

HAWKINS—I tell you what, Sellers reached the top in a hurry.
 ROBBINS—Yes, he must have made pretty good time, for he has been blowing ever since he got there.



MICROSCOPIC METAPHYSICS

MRS. HOYLE—I can read my husband like a book.
 MRS. DOYLE—You must have good eyes to read such a small type.

THE ISLAND OF LOVE

By Richard Stillman Powell

"YOU can see nothing?" asked Doris.

I balanced precariously on the third rail of the straggling fence and searched the horizon with straining eyes. Then my gaze shifted to the intervening wastes. A field of ripening corn spread down the face of the hillside to the fringe of oaks that followed the sluggish river. Here and there a giant of the bottom-land was gone and a glint of deep, placid blue varied the rim of dark green. To the left stretched downward a hill field wherein browsed a herd of sleek, dun-colored Jerseys. To the right the lane crept past the shoulder of the hill, its ochre-dyed soil vivid in the light of the sinking sun. Afar, on every side, rose the mountains, purple with wood-smoke and mist. I turned to Doris.

"Nothing," I said, hopelessly.

She sighed, and for a moment hid her face in her hands.

"And the wreck?" she whispered.

"Is fast breaking to pieces," I answered. "I fear we shall be able to save little."

"The cruel sea!" murmured Doris, with a shudder. For a space we looked disconsolately over the waving corn. Then Doris, who ever since the catastrophe had shamed me with her unflagging hopefulness and bright spirits, smiled bravely and turned away. "Come, let us explore the island. For the present, at least, we are safe."

I descended cautiously from my lookout and taking up the lunch-basket again followed her up the steep incline, slippery with the fallen needles of the pines, until the summit was reached.

"Do you think," Doris asked, presently, "that the island is inhabited?"

"I doubt it; there is little in sight with which to sustain life." Doris tried to look frightened.

"Is there, then, danger of our starving to death here, thousands of miles from home?"

I transferred the basket to the other hand and staggered to the ledge.

"Let us hope for the best," I answered, lightly, depositing my burden in the shade.

"I wonder," she continued, as we sat panting beside the basket, "I wonder what time it is." Thoughtlessly I drew forth my watch.

"No, no!" cried Doris.

I accepted the rebuke, rose and studied the position of the sun. "If we had only thought to bring off the—the—"

"Quadrant," prompted Doris.

"—sextant," I continued, in superior tones, "we could have taken an observation. However, I think that it is about a quarter past five."

"It—it's quite warm, isn't it?" Doris was fanning herself with her hat.

"Quite." I mopped my forehead with my handkerchief. "If we had only had the forethought to be cast away on an ice-floe somewhere near the North Pole, now—"

Doris treated my levity with silent contempt. "Come," she commanded, "let us explore."

I groaned.

"Don't you think it would perhaps be as well to wait until the heat is less intense? I have read somewhere that there is great danger of fever and sun-stroke on these South Sea islands."

"Nonsense!" returned Doris, scathingly, "this isn't a South Sea island; at least, I don't think it is. Please come."

I obeyed. Together we made a tour of our tiny refuge, keeping close to the rail fence that marked the shore line. In extent the island was perhaps eighty feet wide by one hundred feet long, its general shape being that of an irregular ellipse. There was a sharp descent from the ledge in the centre to the shore on every side. The vegetation consisted principally of pine trees, a species of wild rose and a low-growing bush bearing small berries similar in appearance and taste to the blueberries of our Middle Atlantic States. On the side where we had made our landing there was an open expanse some thirty feet square and covered with short turf.

When we reached the farther side of the island we leaned our arms on the fence and looked down almost on to the roof of Laurel House, nestling far below in a grove of squat oaks. From the out-kitchen a slender spiral of blue smoke rose, and I thought regretfully for a bare moment of Aunt Diana's beaten biscuits. Then I glanced at Doris and forgot aught else. What happier fate could mortal man desire than to be cast away on a desert island with Doris? What were beaten biscuits to the joy of seeing the little shadows flit hither and thither on the white neck as the breeze stirred the tiny tendrils of brown hair; to the supreme delight of watching the light sparkle in the tender blue eyes; to the . . .

"I know of what you are thinking," whispered Doris, suddenly, with a world of sympathy in her sweet voice. I started and wondered anxiously if she did. "Yes," she continued, "you are thinking that perchance we shall never be rescued; that we shall linger on and on, losing hope as the dreary days go by, until starvation brings a welcome release."

"I wish it might be so," I murmured. The blue eyes opened wide. "I'd rather a thousand times starve to death here with you than to—go home to supper!"

"Stupid!" said Doris; but there was no displeasure in her tones. "Come," she continued, "let us find the highest point; perhaps we shall sight a sail."

"Doris," I murmured, with a touch of displeasure, "can you think of bargains even in the face of death?"

At the summit we climbed to the top of the little ledge and strained our gaze seaward; at least Doris gazed seaward, while I watched the sunflecks on her cheek. She turned with a gesture of hopeless resignation.

"Nothing but water," she sighed.

"Water, water everywhere," I quoted, "'but not a drop—'"

She clutched my arm.

"Is there not a spring here?" she cried. "Oh, don't say that we are doomed to perish of thirst!"

I glanced fleetingly toward the lunch-basket. Then I shook my head dolefully. "Heaven alone knows," I muttered.

"But hadn't we better search the island?"

"Well—" it was very warm and the pine-carpeted shade looked inviting—"we might, but—" a radiant idea struck me—"there are always the rocks, you know; we can find rain water in the pools." I sat down. Doris eyed me doubtfully for an instant; then she too sank on to the pine needles.

"Very well." She looked thoughtfully out over the golden cornfield.

"The poor *Hilda Jane*!" she murmured.

"Eh? Who?" I exclaimed. Doris looked reproachful. "Oh," I hastened to say, "the ship, to be sure; yes, I fear she is a total wreck ere now."

"And the poor captain!" continued Doris, sadly.

"And the crew!" I added.

"And the other passengers!"

"And—and the ship's cat!"

"Oh," she cried, "was there a cat?"

I nodded. Why conceal the truth? "Yes, there was a cat, a pretty Maltese—" Doris dotes on Malteses—"with four white feet. I saw it struggling and battling with the cruel

waves just as we left the wreck." Doris shuddered and looked almost tearful; then:

"But some cats can swim," she cried, hopefully.

I shook my head. "Not this one; it was blind."

There was a moment of silence.

"Don't let's have any cat," whispered Doris, in a stage aside. I agreed. We watched the sun sink behind the purple mountains; that is, Doris watched the sun. I was thinking of a fellow I knew once at college. He was in love with a girl, a girl with dimples. He was a freshman then. He kissed one of the dimples and got his ears soundly boxed, and was in heaven for a week. And now—now heaven was again within reach of the courageous! I sighed.

Doris turned sympathetically. "Are you hungry?"

I watched the nearest dimple greedily. "Very!"

She pulled the basket toward her and spread a snow-white cloth. I abstracted a cork from the neck of a bottle and laid it aside in case we might need it later to lend buoyancy to a raft. Then I filled two glasses. The empty bottle I also retained. We could write a message praying for succor, place it in the bottle and throw the whole far out into the cornfield, in the hope that it would be picked up by a passing ship. Doris looked more cheerful now that the cloth was spread; and even I saw things more hopefully. We smiled across the banquet.

"Will you try some of these mussels?" I asked. They were buttered and contained thin slices of cold tongue or chicken. Doris paused in the act of helping herself to the jelly and looked across inquiringly.

"From the ship's stores," I said.

She was plainly relieved.

We had, if I remember correctly, besides the mussels and the dewberry jelly, breadfruit, fish that I had caught with an improvised hook and line in the shallow water of a little cove, sea birds' eggs and berries from the low bushes lining the beach.

"Don't you think that this water tastes a little brackish?" asked Doris.

I sipped from my glass reflectively. "A little, perhaps. It—it has a faint bouquet of—of tea." Doris frowned. "But, of course, it isn't that," I hastened to add.

"Will you have another piece of cake?" she asked.

"I beg your pardon."

"Breadfruit, I mean," she corrected, in confusion. I took another piece. Who could say when we would again taste food? Presently I sighed contentedly and drew out my cigarette case. Doris watched me anxiously.

"Aren't they awfully wet?"

"No, only a little damp. The—the case is waterproof, you know."

"It doesn't look it," said Doris.

It didn't, but I wanted a smoke.

"Besides," I continued, "we were in the water such a short time."

Doris opened her eyes very wide.

"Why, it was hours and hours."

"Eh? By Jove, so it was! yes, to be sure. But you can see that they're not wet." I held out the burning cylinder for her inspection. She took it, placed it between her lips, and—choked. The proof was conclusive. She handed it back with averted face.

"It—it's not *very* wet," she stammered.

Twilight descended the farther hills. A whippoorwill sang his first notes in the pasture below.

Doris started. "It's getting dark."

"Yes." She was exaggerating, for it was yet bright daylight on the hill-top. But I knew my part.

"Suppose—suppose a vessel should pass in the darkness."

We gazed, terror-stricken, into each other's eyes. Then:

"A fire!" we cried, in a breath. Doris clapped her hands. I leaped—well, I struggled to my feet. In critical moments I am all energy. In a trice I had collected five twigs, eight dead oak leaves and a handful of dry pine needles; in another moment they were alight and crackling merrily. I lay down again and found that by rolling from side to side and

stretching my arms to their fullest extent I could replenish the beacon with a minimum of exertion. The sparks floated upward. I am certain that the light would have been visible as far away as the middle of the surging cornfield. Doris looked approval.

"They can't fail to see that."

"Only a ship manned by blind men would pass it by," I replied, gravely.

A church bell in the valley rang musically. Below, along the river, blue haze softened the twilight. I tossed a two-inch log on the fire and turned to Doris.

"Do you know," I said, "this is one of the strangest islands it was ever my good fortune to be cast away on?" Doris emptied the pine needles from my hat and looked properly interested. "Yes, in all my previous experiences of this sort I have invariably found evidences of former habitation; ruins of stone houses, marks of axes on trees, rude graves, sometimes an old iron pot or a rusted gun; very often—" I dropped my voice to a sepulchral tone—"skeletons!"

Doris gave a little shriek and glanced timorously back into the grove. "But—but you told me coming up the lane that you'd never been shipwrecked before in your life."

"In a way that's true," I acknowledged, without embarrassment. "But—at various times—in company with Mr. Stevenson, or Mr. Defoe, or Mr. Whiting, or—or others—I have enjoyed shipwreck in all its phases." I thought Doris looked troubled. "Once," I continued, "it was on what we called Treasure Island—we had the jolliest sort of a row with a lot of mutineers. On another occasion I made the acquaintance—ahem!—of some very likable people; of course, on that occasion the island was not exactly a desert one."

"And—I suppose—there were adventures with Indian maidens, and—things like that?" asked Doris, in awfully disinterested tones.

"Well," I replied, with becoming modesty, "of course there were

sometimes women in the case. Once, I recollect, I met a beautiful barefooted maiden with——"

"Minx!" said Doris.

"—wonderful brown eyes; at least, I think they were brown. Her name was—what the deuce was her name? Mr. Whiting introduced me, but—ah, well, it escapes me now. But there was a very pretty romance there." I sighed a trifle regretfully.

Doris threw things at the fire. "But then that was only in a book," she said, presently, with a faint accent of relief.

"Yes, only in a book. But, to tell the truth, Doris, I like being cast away in books. You see there is invariably—at least, almost invariably—a beautiful maiden, with whom you fall deeply in love and eventually marry."

"That's silly," said Doris, contemptuously.

"Sometimes," I continued, regarding her over the glowing tip of my cigarette, in which I tried conscientiously to detect a flavor of salt water, "sometimes it happens that the hero and the heroine are cast away on the desert island together. That is even better, according to my views. There you have the love element right from the start. Before the wreck he has loved her in secret, never daring to even hint his passion, and she has looked upon him merely as an acquaintance. But during the fearsome struggle with the angry waves, he and she together in a frail cockleshell—I think that is correct—admiration for his courage and gratitude for his tenderness come to her. And then, when they at last reach the desert island and, full of thanks for their deliverance, sit over their first scanty meal together—just as we did a while back, you know—the knowledge comes to each that henceforth——"

"Hark!" cried Doris.

I harked. Sounds. We rose and stole to the fence—that is to say, the beach—and watched. Soon, afar off, we saw dimly the topmast of an ap-

proaching ship ascending the winding lane.

"Saved!" cried Doris, dolefully.

"Saved!" I muttered, crossly.

The rescuers, attracted no doubt by our flaring beacon, approached nearer and nearer. Already the hull was visible. I turned to Doris; we looked at each other; with a common impulse we joined hands and fled to the top of the hill. Panting, we sank behind the security of a scrub pine.

"They may be cannibals," I muttered.

"Or—or pirates!" whispered Doris.

The ship drew nearer and cast anchor at the edge of the cornfield.

"Whoa!" cried the captain. Then he looked about. "Miss Doris, yo' ma says you better come home now, honey, 'ca'se it's gittin' dark."

We made no answer. Instead, we huddled together in our place of concealment. Doris had forgotten to withdraw her hand from mine; I had forgotten to remind her. We watched. The captain muttered and glanced around; then he saw the remains of the supper, took a half-hitch with the windlass or cable or something about the whip, drew a corn-cob pipe from his pocket and settled himself comfortably back against the forecastle. It was no use! Rescue stared us in the face!

"I think they are pirates," I whispered.

"Why?"

"Observe the swarthy hue of the captain."

Doris giggled. "I reckon we'll have to go," she sighed.

"Why?" I asked. In some manner my arm had found its way around her waist. Of course, Doris didn't know it; she'd never have permitted it. "Why? Let's stay here forever, Doris!" But she shook her head.

"Don't be silly!" she said, faintly. She may have begun then to suspect that my arm was about her, for she looked a little frightened, I thought. But I wasn't certain, because I was at that moment suffering from something approaching timidity myself.

And then, while the tireless waves washed murmuringly upon the sands, while the sea-birds swirled and circled with plaintive cries against the twilight sky, there, surrounded by leagues and leagues of tossing waters, I whispered to Doris what the hero always whispers to the heroine. And she, realizing, I think, that I was but following precedent, acknowledged the propriety of my words. For she made but the faintest resistance when I kissed her. And ere we crept from our hiding place and faced our rescuers Doris had promised to become cast away with me on that distant shore from which few voyagers return—the Land of Married Life.

Presently our meagre belongings were hoisted over the side of the good ship *Surrey*, Captain Cæsar, Doris and I gained the deck without misadventure, the anchor was weighed, the captain gave the command, "Go 'long, dar!" the sails filled and we glided over the twilight seas toward home, rescued at last.

Doris and I sat hand in hand on the after deck and watched, with something akin to regret, our desert isle slowly disappear from sight beyond the horizon.

"It was a very nice desert island," murmured Doris.

"Yes," I whispered.

"And do you know," she continued, sadly, "we never named it."

"It is not too late," I answered, softly. "Let us call it, dear, the Island of Love."

PUT OUT OF BUSINESS

HEWITT—Money makes the mare go.

JEWETT—Not so, my friend; the automobile has made the mare go.

Sept. 1901

THE SUPREME HOUR

WHEN she was dead, a voice, she knew not whose,
Said to her: "Soul that fell,
To cheer thee there in hell,
Of all thy life's lost loveliness now choose.

"Ask what thou wilt, thou who hast walked 'mid flowers
And songs the easy way
Of pleasure, day by day,
Ask what thou wilt of all thy lived-out hours."

And then she thought: "Oh, shall it be when there,
An innocent maiden, I,
Dreaming, watched love draw nigh,
And felt his kiss rose-sweet on mouth and hair?

"Or shall it be when that mooned night his fingers,
Smoothed from my brow the curls,
And fell, like unstrung pearls,
The words of passionate love whose memory lingers?

"Or shall it be when over land and sea
I heard the sweet unrest
Within his ardent breast,
His heart that beat alone for me, for me?

"Or shall it be when in his circling arms
Soul gazed on kindred soul,
And love had won the goal
Of his desire, and his were all my charms?

"No! no! not these! that hour he left me lost!
Stunned, fallen and despised
Before the world he prized,
When, God forgive me! when I loved him most!"

MADISON CAWEIN.



SENTIMENTAL SOCIALISM

HE—Yes, there is lots of money in the world, but it isn't properly distributed.

SHE—How do you know?

HE—By the large number of unmarried women I run across.

BROCTON MOTT, REALIST

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

HE was in his superb Elizabethan workshop with a half-dozen cronies, discussing Verlaine and eyeing the absinthe under the Tudor lamps. To study and stand aside were Brockie's specialties. He did not crave the absinthe on his palate nor its high jinks in his brain; its neighborhood was sufficient; to clasp the glass with long, pale fingers, to watch the light making smoky changes in the green danger, to taste it dreamily and infrequently were enough. The absinthe was part of the *mise-en-scène* with which he surrounded himself, as were the big settle in the chimney corner and the faded tapestries on which he had spent in one afternoon all of his Uncle Sydney's legacy.

It was two in the morning when Brockie saw the last of his friends depart. He went back and watched the candles' ends giving dying flashes in the Tudor lamps, the spilled absinthe twisting across the big, raftered table patterned after one he had seen in a rotting Irish castle by the Irish Sea. He was satisfied with himself. He had everything—success, youth and position, and he was necessary to another human being—Betty Jefferson, belle of two seasons, blond beauty and heiress to three millions.

But though all was well with him in a material sense, an irritating, contradictory imp had taken possession of him these last few days.

He went over to the big, many-paned window and pushed aside the tapestry. Below yawned the loneliness and electric glitter of upper Fifth Avenue at two o'clock in the morning,

the life of the night over, the life of the day not yet begun.

"It is the hour of innocence," said Brockie, lighting a last cigarette and leaning against the dim arras, which sent out an old fragrance defying a name.

He scowled at the string of lights that lay below like jewels frozen in mid-air; they seemed winking evilly. He watched indifferently the progress of a cab along the drab oblong, and it suggested nothing but a cab.

How often, standing there alone with the silent city below him after a night with his cronies, had he felt his brain quicken, his fingers tingle for a pen! But not to-night. The little company had been as brilliant as usual, but Brockie was like one outside a magic circle without the password; no new inspiration came to rout his obsession of the past week.

"What the devil am I to do?" he thought, nestling into the corner of a huge, pew-like seat near the window; "I can't write the thing and I sha'n't try. I've made my hit with romances of the Middle Ages, and to become modern would be madness. Nothing can excuse a false note. Think of Wagner writing a popular air or of Salvini in a comedy drama and a boiled shirt! Think of Brocton Mott quitting tourneys and moats, forests in fanciful dominions, knights disporting their ladies' colors, and those ladies of the style to be found only in thirteenth century tapestries—leaving all these to write a Balzacian story of this period, of this new country, of New York—not even of my own set, but of common working people who

keep shops and things of that sort—the heroine a working girl!" He gave a mirthless laugh. "I never knew a working girl. I don't believe I ever saw one," he thought, defiantly. "Of course I've passed them on the streets, bought from them over counters, but Lord! I never looked at them with seeing eyes. What the deuce am I to do? Adee wants another story by July, and there isn't an embryo idea lying round but this, and this is full-grown, vital, going to fight for its life. If I could only put the scene in England at the time of the Roman Invasion—but I can't."

Brockie left his man to put out the candles and place the iron guard before the sinking embers and went to bed.

In the morning his idea was with him, poised like a sprite on his pillow, and an insistent sprite that threatened to grow to an Amazon and overpower him.

"There's no use trying to get away from it," he muttered at last; "I've got to write it."

Though a luxurious worldling, a human exotic by birth and habit, and encrusted with the affectations of the aesthetic tribe, Brockie was nevertheless honestly a writer of much strength and originality. His idea, though set in an environment to which he was not attracted, seemed so genuinely an inspiration that when once he yielded to its insistence his determination grew into veritable enthusiasm.

"The heroine first," said Brockie, as he dressed. "I'm an apostle of Truth off to find a working girl. She must be young but have the air of being experienced in responsibilities. She must be beautiful, with subtlety and character in her face; accepted suffering must be there as a mist over water; she must enshrine the unexpected; something about her must inspire both worship and pity."

He turned to the east and took a Third avenue car down town. It carried a load of deplorables; all uninteresting, some offensive. At the beginning of the Bowery he leaped

off and walked along past glittering pawnshops and liquor "parlors," the elevated trains thundering over him and racking his nerves. He saw a face that might be used for the Italian sailor in his story, followed the man to a cheap eating-house and paid for rolls and coffee he did not touch. He saw an old man who might do for the miser he required; but among the women he passed there was none with more than features.

"Beauty?" thought Brockie, with complete weariness, "who says poor women have beauty?"

Girls looked after him and laughed. He was exquisite for the Bowery.

More than a week went by in his search for types. He found the neighborhood he wanted and made minute notes; he found the house where much of the story would occur; he had the sailor, the miser, the cripple, the heroine's brother, a fairly good composite idea of her lover—but where was she? Pretty working girls he had seen since the first day, but not his goddess in rags. He began to believe she did not exist. With inertia and dismay he shut up his papers and went to play golf at Aiken for a week.

Fifth Avenue was looking lovely when he came back. Though early in March, Spring seemed in its apogee. Shadow and light sent moth-like flickerings over the tall houses, and a sky as blue as Italy's showed above them. The crowded, uphill Avenue glittered like a new coin.

"Why, Brockie!"

He knew that lisp and drawl, and he knew who affected pure, distilled roses as a perfume. Mary Lanmouth was getting out of a brougham. She was all in gray.

"So glad you're back!" she said.

"Where are you going? Take me in tow."

"Come along. I've been an hour at Léontine's trying on, and I'm dead. I'm making for a little tea-room here. It's only been open a little while, and it's all done up in Chinese trappings—the dearest place. I want to hear the Aiken news. Is

Fifi Bleeker letting her hair go back? Are the Heriot-Grays going to take that big family wash to the divorce court? What's the matter, Brockie? Who is it?"

They were seating themselves in a corner, and Brockie was staring over her shoulder and down the vacant room as if about to greet someone.

"It's only that girl by the tea urn. Here she comes," he said, and sat back with a sigh of content.

"Oh, I've seen her before. Isn't she a lovely creature? She makes me feel like a germ. She has no business walking about. She belongs on a pedestal."

The waitress came over, a lacquered tray in her hand.

"Tea, please," said Mary.

Brockie said nothing. He was looking at the unconcerned beauty's face in absorbed silence.

"We'll have something to nibble," said Mary. "Biscuits, please."

"There are no biscuits, only crackers," said the goddess; "you can have them buttered or sweet."

"Crackers, then, buttered," and Mary made a *move* at Brockie as the girl moved off. "A pedestal indeed for her, and she in marble, so she couldn't speak and break the spell."

But she just suited Brockie. Her voice was melodious, her accent uncultivated. She did not suggest the decadent gentlewoman, and the minor inference of "better days" did not hang about her. He needed her just as she was—a girl of the people, born in a tenement, with her shoes worn sideways at the heel, but with that about her which awakened speculation as to what her possibilities and limitations might be, and with a face to make one dream of historic women of great beauty and dark sins.

His mind was now as responsive as an instrument strung and tuned as he imbibed leisurely every detail of the girl's face. Save for her dead white skin she was a perfect Egyptian type. The black, crinkled hair grew up from her low forehead and thick, round neck with a lustrous clearness that left each individual tendril show-

ing as if it were fibrous jet set in wax; her nose was level with her forehead—a rare thing in these days—the nostrils spreading slightly and scarce lifted by a curve; the fine, long eyebrows swept across her forehead in the lines of scythes; the eyes were a burning gold, with heavy lids glistening as tulip leaves; the mouth was full and long, with flowing curves, as ardent and discontented as her eyes.

In her occupation of tea server a black-and-gold embroidered Chinese coat covered her to the knees, leaving exposed a dingy skirt with bulging shoes beneath it.

She had no eyes for the pair she had served. They were nothing to her. She stood by the tea-urn again, an elbow in one hand, her chin in the other. Brockie, who missed nothing, heard her sigh heavily and impatiently as she stared at the animated Avenue through the window.

Mary left him there and went on to her milliner's. He said he had some scribbling to do and liked the sandal-scented corner and the tea.

"And—the girl," said Mary, shaking a pearl *Suède* finger at him. "Ah, Brockie, you innocent, to imagine I don't catch on! Your artistic perceptions must not rust because Betty Jefferson happens to be in Europe, eh?"

"Really, you're wrong—you don't understand."

"Oh, of course not! But I'd like to stay and watch the *modus operandi*. How will you begin with her? What fun to be a man and be able to climb trees to pick peaches!"

She laughed and fluttered out. The girl by the urn looked after her somberly, then at him, and resumed her staring.

He struck his spoon on the saucer. She caught up her tray and crossed the room to him.

"What are you thinking about?" he drawled.

Her gaze filled with the quick mockery of her kind for what they do not understand, then changed to open amusement.

"She thinks me crazy," was

Brockie's reflection; and he was right.

"Do you want more tea?" she asked, coldly.

"Presently. But I'd like to know, first, what you think of here all day. This shop is very quiet."

"Trade's dull," she said. "We shut up to-morrow; it doesn't pay."

"And then? What do you do then?"

She shrugged her shoulders, her gold-colored eyes inscrutable.

"You'll get other work somewhere?"

"That ain't so easy." She looked at him with deepening amusement.

"You can ask questions to beat the bass drum, can't you?"

"I hope I've not asked too many, because I want to ask more. What's your name and where do you live?"

"I don't see that that's your business." Her brows met in genuine anger. "Do you want more tea, or don't you?"

"Which means—get out," said Brockie, sadly, as he sat back and screwed his glass into his eye. "Now see how unreasonable you are. Here I stroll in, help to break up your slow day, find you most interesting from a most respectful standpoint, and you want to turn me out. Do you know I've been searching this town for you for weeks?"

He saw her gasp.

"For me?" she faltered.

"For you. Now that I've found you you're not going to get rid of me so easily. I need you as a model."

Her face cleared. At last she could assign a status to him in her thoughts.

"So you're an artist. I didn't know whether you were a masher or just plum crazy. But as you are an artist—"

"I have the privilege of madness, eh? You know some artists, then?"

"I was a model for a little while before I got this place. It was tiresome standing round, and I caught cold."

Her beauty was enrapturing as she stood there with folded arms, delivering these flat statements, and the

artist in Brockie was drunk with satisfaction.

"Tell me something about it," he said, his voice hushed, afraid to seem too eager. "What did you pose for?"

"Oh, my goodness!—lands only knows! Generally lying round on a sofa togged out in shawls and a pipe." She gave a disdainful gurgle. "That was easy, but last time I had to stand on one foot with a tray held out—so," and she assumed the pose.

"Salome, I'll bet—and what a Salome!" exclaimed Brockie.

"That's it," she said, now vivacious and at ease; "that's what he called it. I saw the picture afterward. Ugh! he'd put a head on the tray—John the Baptist's. I got cold there, too. I had stuff like a curtain round me and a lot of gold jingamarees hanging over my face. I said I'd never pose again, but I may have to when this is shut up."

"Well, will you pose for me?" asked Brockie, promptly. "I'll pay you well."

"Draped?" she snapped, taking up cup and saucer as another customer came in.

"Just as you are. In fact, I sha'n't want to paint you. I'm another kind of artist. I merely want to study you."

"Study *me*!" and she laughed heartily, her hand on her hip.

"Yes, I mean to put you in a book. I'm a writer. Here's my card. What's your name and where do you live?"

"Celia Murphy, No. — Rivington street."

"Will you come to-morrow?"

"What time?"

"Ten o'clock."

"All right."

On the morrow and on many days following Celia was a fixture in Brockie's home. At first she was frankly suspicious of his sanity and his intentions. To be told that all she had to do in order to earn a generous salary was to make herself quite at home in this odd, beautiful place, to rest and eat and chatter, put a point on her natural sharpness

and kept her instinct of self-defense awake.

But as weeks went by and nothing happened to alarm her she gave Brockie up as a puzzle for which she had no answer, and with vagabond philosophy made the most of a comfortable situation where she was paid and fed for doing nothing.

During the first week Brockie scarcely went out at all. He spent the days in an oriental robe and made Celia talk to him until she assured him her "jaws ached."

"What on earth do you want to hear all this stuff for?" she said at last. "You ask so many questions about where I live, about my Aunt Mary, my brother Matt—and—and—Denny Ryan—and how much my father earns on the ferryboat, anyone would think you were a detective." Her eyes narrowed shrewdly and she stood up. "I wonder if you are—I wonder. I wonder if you got me here to give Denny away. Is that it? Has he done something? Has he?" and such splendid scorn blazed from her eyes Brockie's heart glowed within his narrow chest.

"Don't be foolish, Celia! I'm just what I told you. I write books. Do you understand? I'm writing about a girl like you. She has a lover. You have a lover. I want to read your heart, for that will help me to understand my heroine. Don't you see? I want to find out how much you love Denny Ryan—that's a good name for my man, by Jove!—how much you'd do for him, and if, for instance, I were a detective—which is nonsense—and you betrayed him to me unguardedly, just how you'd feel and what you'd do. Now there—tell me that."

She swept him with a look of burning contempt, and he could see the pulse beating in her strong, white throat.

"If I did that," she said in a still voice, the words like slow drops of water, "I'd first shake the breath out of your miserable little body—then I'd lie for Denny—I'd swear lies on a stack of Bibles—and if they

sent him up I'd throw myself in the river!"

"You would?" cried Brockie, seizing her hands and swinging them. "Yes, by gad, you would! Splendid! Don't stop."

"That's all I have to say," she said, and sank into stormy silence.

Brockie told no one of his "find." He had half a dozen rooms in his suite, and Celia was easily kept out of sight of chance callers. Occasionally he made her stay and dine with him, but generally she left before the evening hours, when his cronies were likely to drop in. As it was Brockie's habit to withdraw from society when busy on a book until he had the first proofs read, his absence created no comment, and meanwhile the novel progressed in strides. He made many excursions into the tenement house district where Celia lived, and once prevailed on her to ask him to lunch in her own home. What a mine of suggestion that day was!—the most important item being the unexpected visit of Denny Ryan, who with keen eyes looked murder at Brockie over the sausages and fried potatoes.

"I'm glad I went," he said, as he sat writing that night. "What reality a few actual details give! the smoky lithograph of the Pope over the stove, that one-eyed cat, and above all the red hair on Ryan's hands." Brockie helped himself to brandy and sniffed at the hyacinths in his coat. "That man is as tribal in his instincts as one of Boadicea's oarsmen! It's a great bit of insight to realize it's the brute in him that Celia loves."

Four months droned away in Brockie's studio, days full of peace and veritable charm. The novel was practically done, and he was lingering in town to give it the last touches. August at the latest would see him in Newport, and there he would meet Betty again.

"I am coming home, Brockie," she had written, "and will be with the Fordhams for August. It will be good to see Bellevue avenue again. I've caught a big fish for the season,

too. Lord Braybrooke and his sister are coming home with me. He is decidedly *épris*, dear boy, and not with my ducats, either. If I were not foolish enough and democratic enough to think Brockie Mott an awfully nice boy I could be a duchess. Don't let this keep you awake, though. I am, as ever, the same

"BETTY."

The windows of the studio were open in the breezy afternoon, and the murmur of the town, hushed by distance, had the sleepy cadence of the sea. Celia was sitting in an East Indian chair—an anachronism in the early English studio which was permitted by hot weather—absorbed in a book, and Brockie was turning over a lot of loose leaves, the accumulated scribbles of four months, preparatory to destroying them.

He glanced now and then at Celia as his eye ran over them:

NOTES

I think Celia has a secret contempt for me. To pay her for coming here and talking to me strikes her as poor business sense. I often catch her looking at me as a naturalist looks at a queer bug. She does not admire me. She likes strength and bigness in a man. She told me so.

To-day I made her have her hands done. She has good nails, fundamentally. She was as pleased as a child who is told to pull a clock to pieces. I'll make her take some treatments.

Happened in and found her studying her profile in my hand mirror. I know she'd been ransacking my bathroom, too. She was strong of my *verbena* extract. She's of an inquiring mind. Well, she's a woman.

Celia is as luxurious and dainty as a cat. She's just waking to a knowledge of what ease and beauty mean. I sometimes think she's Cleopatra doing penance in this life for her many *petites affaires* and her penchant for murder. I find her reading a lot. It was "The Life of Nelson" yesterday.

She's passing from admiring to assimilating what's best, and criticising what's deficient. She wears her hair in the fashionable pompadour now. Very fetching. She asked me yesterday what I thought the most useful and the most

absolutely necessary attribute in manners a society woman should possess. I suggested self-possession. This morning I've noticed that with the enthusiasm of the convert she's going about with a perfectly expressionless face, and I don't believe a pistol shot at her ear would make her wink an eyelash.

She's making rapid progress. Nature can transform a beggar maid into a princess by a sleight of hand, but Lazarus might study high life at the rich man's gate for a score of years, and if some accident of fortune placed him in Dives's seat the ear-marks of the beggar could not be hidden by the costliest raiment.

Celia has the instinct of her sex which makes her know without understanding. She is studying me while I'm studying her. Her accent is improving. Her mistakes in the use of words become more and more infrequent. The common tang in her speech has absolutely gone.

Celia surprised me to-day. I've been told I treat the most serious topics with languid flippancy. I find the same inclination growing in her. She surprised me by hurling one of my own epigrams at me. All women are delightful. They are mysteries. They keep yearning and reaching out for the Beyond. Men are not like that. Celia amazes me.

Correcting her manners at table has been highly diverting. They are quite perfect now. She has ease and discretion.

At last I've hit on a name for my book—"A Goddess in Rags." I make the heroine outgrow the title, just as Celia has done. The book is absolutely raw truth.

Three months since the day Celia came here. She has on a very pretty gown to-day. It's only gingham, but I'm sure she's wearing better stays, for her hips are not one-sided as they used to be—from broken whalebones, I imagine; the muslin cunningly responds to the curves of her form. Her low, russet shoes, too, are really smart—broad toe and low heels. I remember once telling her they were the right thing. How adaptive women are! A hint sends them spinning along the right road. A man must either be whipped or led along with a guide-book every step of the way.

She does not speak of Denny Ryan any more. In fact, I can't induce her to discuss him. Well, thank heaven, before this uncommunicativeness set in I caught

him and will have him safe behind the covers of a book by the Fall.

Brockie tore the papers into fragments, and clasping his hands around his knees looked meditatively at Celia. It was all true. The pretty, rough colt had assumed the sleekness and shine of a thoroughbred. Celia was an amazingly perfect counterfeit, a splendid imitation.

She wore gingham, but she required velvet and lace. Her hair, ruffled by the breeze, could not have glistened more had a maid's arms ached from brushing it. The hands that held the heavy volume over which she bent were white and soft, the nails like faint pink jewels.

"What's the book to-day, Celia?" he asked, lounging over to a seat near her.

"'Nelson,'" she murmured, without looking up.

"Still 'Nelson!' I thought you'd finished that weeks ago."

"I'm reading it again."

"You find the progress of a hero fascinating?"

She placed the book face downward on her knee and lifted her reposeful, glowing eyes.

"Not Nelson. Lady Hamilton is far more fascinating to me. He loved her awfully, didn't he?"

"You'd like to be loved that way?"

"Oh, yes. But she didn't deserve that love. I can tell. Oh, a woman can see straight through her. She never loved anyone but Charles Greville. When he sold her to Sir William Hamilton she thought first of herself forever after. Everyone was wild about Nelson, and that's what caught her—his—er—glory. She didn't love him. Here's her picture as a sibyl—isn't that a sort of witch? Wait—I'll look in the dictionary, anyway. I found lots of words yesterday."

"You find books interesting, Celia?" he said, when she had resumed her seat after finding the definition.

"Some books. You know when I was going through the public school I read nothing but story papers. Before I came here I'd been reading

novels a lot. But oh, these books here—that 'Life of Nell Gwynn'—real people, eh?—oh, they're wonderful! I'd studied of King Charles in school, but there wasn't a word about Nell Gwynn in the history. She was the limit—eh?" and she laughed gaily. "King Charles wasn't any better. They had high jinks at that court, on my word. Oh, I'm going to find out lots after this. I belong to a library now, and I'll get books like this in future. I'll be dreadfully wise very soon."

"Celia, tell me about Denny Ryan. When are you going to marry him?"

A flush spread under her white skin, a look of disgust crept into her eyes, then her lids fell and her face grew cold.

"I don't see Mr. Ryan any more."

"A lovers' quarrel?"

"No, Mr. Mott, I don't like him any more, and I can't understand how I ever liked him. I guess—I think it must have been because I was so lonely and had the blues so terribly, and he was the only one who tried to cheer me."

"Poor Denny! Then he's no longer welcome in Rivington street?"

She looked up with a pretty defiance.

"I don't live there any more."

"You've left your home?"

"You see, my brother took Denny Ryan's part, and they both said—well, no matter. I couldn't stand it. You see, I was different from them, and I only wanted a chance to find it out. Well, somehow being here with you and getting to know a few things have made me very sure of it. I cleared out of the place, and I board in Seventeenth street now. I go and see my father on the ferryboat often and give him some money. He is really glad I've left. The poor old man is satisfied as long as I do well, and he has peace in his home now. I love him, and if I ever can I'll make things easy for him."

The next night Brockie dined with his cronies at Ardsley and stayed on to garden theatricals at a house in the neighborhood. He took the last

train to the city. It was almost one o'clock when he paid the cabby at his door. As he crossed the pavement a waltz tune as rapid as a dervish's whirl, and born of the champagne, was spinning in his brain. He thought he saw a shadow waver before him and retreat. As he pulled out his key and went up the one step to the cavernous doorway he became aware that the shadow was beside him. Then it seemed as if the house came down on him. In reality he received a vicious blow from a hard fist. He was dragged by the collar into the light of the lamp:

Denny Ryan's face flamed at him, and Brockie closed his eyes. It was not a pleasant face to look on. He had likened him to one of Boadicea's oarsmen, but he looked now, with his big body, red hair and white, sneering face, like an earlier savage, a primeval man setting out to seize the woman he desired, and ready to slay all who stood in his path. This idea flashed through Brockie's brain even while Ryan shook him and leered at him.

"So it's you as took my girl, is it, and filled her with notions, so no one's good enough to walk on the same side of the street with her? It's you's come between us, is it? Do you mean to marry her, or what's your game? Did you think because you had cash and fine clothes you could come with your lugs and throw ice between us without gettin' biffed for it, did yeh?"

Brockie found it hard to speak. The stillness of the street was oppressive. No one would come to help him. He poured forth denials mixed with a broken explanation, and moaned that what he said was the truth.

Ryan uttered an exclamation of scorn.

"I guess on lookin' at you close I'm a fool to bother my head. I guess Celia is just playin' with you, an' that's the God's truth. You couldn't make a girl go to the devil for you—well, I guess not, an' I don't believe she'd marry you. She's jest

foolin' with you, an' she'll git sense again. But look here—you let her alone after this—keep out of her way—or I'll do for you, sure. This time I'll just show you what you get fer sneakin' round my girl and turnin' her against me."

The force of his fist sent Brockie whirling against the railings. The blow was repeated several times, till Brockie ceased to groan and lay still on the pavement.

When milkmen and home-going cats were beginning to animate the neighborhood he crawled with difficulty to his rooms, and all the next day his man was busy anointing and bandaging his bruises. When Celia arrived the doors were closed against her. For three days following she was greeted by the same message:

"Mr. Mott has met with an accident and can see no one."

As she persisted in her visits Brockie came to a determination.

"I'll see her once more, pay her and dismiss her. She'll keep coming here till this is settled."

A few mornings later, during a sudden Summer rain that beat on the roof with the noise of drums, she appeared. Brockie thought he had never seen her look so beautiful. She might have posed as a latter-day nymph in drenched lawn and dripping sailor hat, her skin wet and faintly rosy, her eyes laughing, the firm flesh of her shoulders and arms gleaming nakedly through the clinging white fabric.

"I've come four blocks in that torrent without an umbrella," she cried, as she entered. "My shoes are like a sponge."

The words faltered toward the close. Her own dilemma was forgotten as she gazed solemnly at Brockie. He was bent forward as if in pain, his eyes were cerise and purple, his left hand bandaged. Crouched into the corner of the big, pew-like seat, and looking abjectly cowed, he told of his experience.

"I was afraid this might happen," said Celia, gravely. "Ryan often

threatened to 'do' you, as he called it. I'm sorry."

She sat down and fanned herself with her sailor hat.

"So I sha'n't need you any more, Celia," said Brockie, hurriedly, caressing his lame hand; "I'll pay you for the rest of the month, and you'll oblige me by—well, by going at once, please."

She looked round the room regretfully.

"It's been nice here," she said, a wistful little smile rippling over her face; "I'll never forget it."

As she put on her hat Brockie was roused from his miserable self-absorption to notice her condition.

"But I say, how wet you are!"

"Absolutely drenched. I'm an awful guy—eh?"

"But you can't go that way. You're really not presentable."

"Let me stay and dry myself. That won't be much," she said, with sudden eagerness.

Brockie looked unhappy. He flickered his eyelashes in uncertainty.

"An hour more can't matter one way or another," with a curl of her lip; "I shall stay."

"All right. Go into my room and get off your wet clothes. Turn on the asbestos logs in there and dry them," he said, wearily; "you'll find something among my stuff to put on in the meantime."

Then Brockie fell into miserable reflection, the fear of Denny Ryan making his mouth taste like brass. Presently a laugh like a child's rang through the studio, and Celia leaped out.

"Look, I found this. I feel as if I were a model again. Isn't it pretty?"

She whirled before him in the white and scarlet livery of a syce, which he had brought from Egypt. Her damp hair, unbound, swept over the brilliant jacket; below the baggy linen trousers her bare feet flashed as she danced on the dark skins on the floor.

"This is so comfortable!" she said, flinging herself down on one of the wide settles. The sun, breaking out,

poured in a golden radiance that made a glory round her.

Brockie could only gaze at her. He felt an adoration, a faint sense of ecstasy steal over him. It was the worship of the artist for beauty. There was nothing physical in it. The same feeling had dominated him when he took his first long look at the Taj in an ethereal moonrise.

"Celia," he said, slowly, "I never told you that I think you very beautiful. You know you are."

She gave a soft, contented laugh.

"Since I've been here," she said, "and talked with you and read a lot I know what it means for a woman to be beautiful. I'm glad I am," she added, with musing determination.

They talked of other things. Brockie's terrors for himself departed. He read aloud to her, and before either realized it Parks announced luncheon.

"You'll lunch with me, Fatima," said Brockie, his hospitable smile and brilliantly tinted eye illuminating his face oddly. "This last day will be a pleasant one."

"I wonder if I'll ever see you again after to-day, Mr. Mott," Celia asked as she took her place at the table.

"I hardly think so," Brockie ventured, hurriedly, the thought of Denny Ryan falling like a shadow on his sense of well-being. "You'll wish my book success to-day, won't you, Celia?"

She smiled at him over a glass of Chablis. He lifted his, but before the rims could touch in the expression of a toast, Brockie's slipped from his fingers and he stared beyond her, open-mouthed.

There was such terror and awe on his face Celia started up in affright.

"M'm—what is it?" she whimpered, and gave a reluctant glance over her shoulder.

She looked confused for a moment, then her bare feet pattered over the floor to Brockie's room, the door closing sharply behind her.

Brockie wavered to his feet with a white face. He knew now that what

had shocked him was not a vision, not a vagary of his sick brain. Visitors stood in the open doorway. Betty Jefferson, very pale, was there, her head held up at the angle of invincible pride he had occasionally seen and feared. A blond man was beside her, his tweeds and eyeglass proclaiming the Briton. In the more shadowy distance he faintly saw a gray-haired woman staring fixedly through a lorgnon. It was an awful moment. His actual eye saw them; his astral vision was occupied by the picture of Celia fluttering shamefacedly away in her bare feet, baggy trousers and tumbled hair. If the studio floor had opened and tenderly received Brockie into some subterranean retreat where thought by some magic process was suspended and permanent forgetfulness assured, the innermost desire of his soul would have been answered.

Parks approached him with stricken face.

"Nothing would do but Miss Jefferson would come in and surprise you, sir," he said, helplessly; "she simply wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. It's Lord Braybrooke and Lady Upperton-Frere with her, sir."

Brockie looked into his frightened eyes and had energy for one sincere "Damn!" between his teeth before he approached his guests. They retreated before him as if indeed created of mist. He heard the elder lady say: "Rully!" and gasp.

Lord Braybrooke said nothing. He was contentedly impassive.

"Betty!" implored Brockie, and seized his sweetheart by the tail of her fawn covert coat as she turned to go.

Her face was small, white and determined. She swept him with a look of cold disgust and a sneering smile over her shoulder.

"We never know, do we?" she asked, in her light, abrupt way.

"Betty—Betty—I can explain." and they were the most vital words Brockie had ever spoken.

"Oh, I dare say. The explanation is all ready, quite cut and dried, no

doubt." She wrenched her arm from his grasp. "Lord Braybrooke, I'm sorry my little escapade has ended in this dénouement. I assure you I never was aware of these Turkish tendencies in Mr. Mott, and I never saw him with a damaged face before. Neither improves him, I'll admit. Let us go."

There are errors that go just beyond the pale of pardon. In the judgment of Betty Jefferson this was one.

Her engagement to Lord Braybrooke was speedily announced.

Two days later Brockie burned the half-dozen letters she had returned unopened and carried his sore heart to Paris and forgetfulness. He stayed there fifteen months. On the night of his return he dined his publisher.

"You shouldn't have done it, Mott," said that person, with weighty wisdom, after a doleful account of the falling off in the sales of "A Goddess in Rags." "I thought so from the first, but was glad to get anything from you, so let it go. No more tenement house life after this, my boy—it's Greek to you. A person to make that side of existence interesting must be a realist. No more working girls—you know nothing about them. Anyone would know the entire story was evolved from your romantic imagination. Take your heroine, for example—she's the most impossible bit of drawing in the whole book. She's utterly untrue to life, too intelligent, too adaptive, too unwittingly wise."

"But even after enlightenment I made her drift back to her native element and die an outcast on the wharves," Brockie mildly expostulated.

"She should never have left the wharves. They don't, in real life, dear boy." There was the concern of a gentle mentor on Ade's full face as he fingered one of Brockie's best cigars. "Look at that man you call Denny Ryan, too. Why, he's pure fiction—there's nothing tangible to him. He doesn't take hold of you. Why do you grin?"

"Go on."

"Well, that's all. The book is a libel on real life. You should have made a study of a shopgirl as a surgeon goes in for vivisection. But you didn't," he sighed, wearily, "dear boy, you didn't, and the book's a hopeless failure."

Brockie gave a ghastly smile and sipped his absinthe thoughtfully.

A few nights later he slipped into an orchestra chair to see a metropolitan comedy much talked of because of the exact flavor with which it set forth the happenings of the smart world. There he saw a new actress whose resemblance to Celia Murphy was startling. The very similarity was an affront to his artistic judgment, for whenever the memory of Celia had touched his mind he had imagined her back in the element from which he had temporarily taken her, hanging out Ryan's shirts, soap-suds on her arms and a wedding ring like a cart wheel on her finger.

This actress was cast for the minor part of a young and blasé widow, and anything more fetching than her handling of a few sparkling and risqué situations could not be imagined. Her beauty had the finish of a finely cut jewel, and in her gowns, simple, *chic*, but of a curious and expert handiwork that made every woman in the audience estimate their cost, she was beyond cavil.

Brockie fumbled for his monocle and his programme. The part of Mrs. Fairweather was played by Cicely Murfree.

He felt humbled, awed and chilled for a moment.

"The apotheosis of Celia," he murmured.

As he watched her an affection for her flowered in his heart. She was his. He had found her. He had made this dazzling conclusion possible. As a model he had made a conscientious study of her. It was only fair that, as an actress, she should furnish amusement for him. This was his right. He recalled her in the syce's livery, and a heady recklessness swept over him.

DEAR CELIA:

You haven't quite forgotten me? I want you to come to supper at my place to-night. We'll have a lark talking over old times. Do, please. If not to-night, when may I see you?

He scribbled this on his card, found an envelope at the box office and sent it in, waiting for an answer in a murky, September drizzle by the stage door. He expected an informal, verbal response which might be:

"Miss Murfree says to step into her dressing-room, please."

Instead of this, a note, written on heavy gray paper, was handed him:

MY DEAR MR. MOTT:

I remember you most distinctly. I regret, however, having to deny myself the pleasure of supping with you now or at any future time. I shall be pleased to send you cards to my marriage in a fortnight to Sir Alfred Goring.

Sincerely,

CICELY MURFREE.

Brockie sat long alone in his studio that night. His lips wore a chagrined and mocking smile.

"Truth," he said, looking through the smoke wreaths as if at a visible presence, "a word with you. Madam, from to-night I forswear you forever. Poets think of you as a straight-limbed goddess with eyes like the dawn, but I know you now as you are, young woman. Your sense of humor is not fine; you are a practical joker with a sly nudge and a broad wink. I imagined you in peplum and sandals, but you are quite capable of a sailor hat on one side and an eelskin skirt. I thought I had found you and given you to the public. The public didn't recognize you; they had another impression of you. Well, as it turns out, you have laughed in your sleeve at us both. Many ills befell me through a slavish devotion to you, but I'll never forgive you for the last one—Celia Murphy, soon to be Lady Goring, has snubbed me. Good-night, madam. Our acquaintance is at an end."

But in the magical hour nearing dawn, when death and birth have their way and strange thoughts creep into the brains of sleepers, he dreamed that Truth called upon him. She was neither the shining-eyed goddess of his earlier fancy nor the coarse joker of his denunciation. She was really a smart young woman in a tweed gown and sensible boots.

"I just dropped in to explain," she said, with directness. "You mustn't blame me for the unpleasant surprises you've experienced. The fact is, the whole trouble came about through that girl. She upset all my calculations. I couldn't control her. She just snapped her

fingers at me and walked off. Women have a way of doing that. You can never be certain what they're going to do or be. I meant Celia to marry Denny Ryan. That's what she would have done, but—catch her! Why, she mocked at me. I could box her ears. This explanation is due you, and I do hope you won't strike me off your list. You might at least be one of the crush now and then at my 'at homes'—and between you and me, my dear Mr. Mott, this is about as nearly as anyone gets to know me. I have a large acquaintance, but no friends. I'll look for your card now and then. Good morning."



THE COQUETTE

FAIR Bessie waved her fan with glee,
And being in a playful mood,
She gave the airy toy to me
And bade me flirt it if I could.

The pleasing task I quick began,
But jealous pangs my heart-strings hurt.
"My dear, I cannot flirt a fan,
But with your leave I'll fan a flirt."

J. R. B.



SOLILOQUIES IN THE SHADE

WHEN a man flatters himself that he knows a woman, he—flatters himself.

The most effective argument a charming woman can use to a man is an appealing "Don't you think so?"

When a girl says emphatically that she won't, it is morally certain that she will; when she says she will, will she?

The greatest lack of logic is displayed by the man who reasons logically with a woman.

The girl who judges a man from the curl of his mustache does not deserve much sympathy when she is disillusioned.

The gaudy tinsel of admiration is a surer bait for woman than the gold of devout love.

Man loves to be praised for his intuition, woman for her logic. As a rule, neither possesses either.

It is always a matter of surprise that others should take their worries so much to heart; also that they make so light of ours.

L. DE V. M.

VAN PUYSER'S GODMOTHER

By Harry C. Carr

YOUNG Mr. Van Puyster did not know there was a fairy godmother in the family until she rose up out of the coals of his bachelor fire. Mr. Van Puyster was a modern young man; he was so up to date that the calendar had to run forced draught to keep up.

His fairy godmother waved her wand at him.

"Have you a pumpkin?" she demanded.

"Dear me, I am afraid I haven't," said Mr. Van Puyster, somewhat piqued, for he prided himself on a perfectly appointed apartment. "Isn't there something else I could offer? Perhaps you would like some chilled sliced watermelon?"

Mr. Van Puyster's fairy godmother looked annoyed.

"It isn't to eat," she said, severely. "I wanted to do my famous pumpkin specialty."

Van Puyster expressed polite interest.

"I intended to make you a coach-and-four out of a pumpkin."

"Wouldn't a pumpkin pie do?" he suggested, solicitously. "I could send out for a pie."

"No," said the fairy godmother, firmly, "a pie wouldn't do at all."

"Well, don't bother," said Mr. Van Puyster, soothingly. "I'm tired of coaching, anyhow. Make me a sofa cushion instead." He had too much tact to tell her that he had three coaches in his stables.

"No," said the old lady, in quite a pet, "this pumpkin specialty is one of the best things I do."

Just then Mr. Van Puyster's clock boomed out eleven heavy strokes.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" she cried. "Only one short hour in which to make that coach, and then I must away like the wind over hill and dale."

"Careful you are not arrested for fast driving," cautioned Van Puyster, kindly, as she rose to go.

"I am not going to drive," she retorted, tartly.

"Surely you are not going in a car on such a sloppy night!" Van Puyster was simply horrified. "Really, I cannot allow it," he protested. "Let me ring for one of my auto-carriages." He turned to her deferentially. "Will you have the hansom or the drag?"

She saw the futility of making a pumpkin coach for such a man, and sat down again on the fender, quite discouraged.

"Isn't there something I can do for you?" she asked, mournfully.

"Of course, if you feel that you need the exercise—" began Van Puyster.

"Maybe you would like a fortune of golden dollars?" she said, with an anxious expression, for this was one of her hardest stunts.

"Oh, Lord, not another fortune!" begged Van Puyster, plaintively. "People bother me to death leaving me fortunes."

The fairy godmother looked immensely relieved.

"If you have a shingle handy I could make you a boat to sail the seas," she said, hurriedly, changing the subject.

Van Puyster flushed hotly. "Is there anything the matter with the *Duchess*?" he asked, cuttingly.

The *Duchess* was his new 2,000-ton ocean-going steam yacht, of which he was justly proud.

The fairy godmother had not entirely lost hope.

"I know where there is a princess for you to wed," she said.

"A pretty princess?" asked Van Puyster.

"All princesses are pretty," said the fairy godmother, frowning.

"Guess you haven't seen many princesses," remarked Van Puyster, drily, thinking of some he had seen.

"Well, this one is a peach," said the fairy godmother, who was susceptible to atmosphere.

Van Puyster thought it over.

"No," he said at last, "no, it wouldn't do. No, I'm sorry, but it wouldn't do at all. I'd be photographed in the newspapers as the husband of the princess, and at the breakfast table, when we rowed, she would tell me about the family tree. I don't want to be an 'also ran.' Besides," he said, blushing slightly, "I already have a queen who keeps me pretty busy."

"Is your loved one locked up in a tower?" asked the old lady, trembling with eagerness.

"No," said Van Puyster, "she's at Newport."

"Let me take a message to your love. I shall go on the wings of the wind," said the fairy godmother, playing her last trump.

"Thanks awfully," said Van Puyster, "but I just telegraphed to her. Your windy wings would be left at the post."

"If you were only in a dungeon cell yourself!" moaned the old lady.

"I was arrested once at college for stealing a barber pole," said Van Puyster, ruminating.

"How did you get out of the dungeon keep?" asked the fairy godmother, with a show of professional interest.

"I didn't get in; I bribed the policeman."

She was going, and Van Puyster had risen to hand her the fairy wand of which he had courteously relieved

her. As it caught the light of the fire, something about it attracted his attention. He examined it critically.

"I suppose you fairies sort of mix in together, don't you?"

"Of course we have our set."

"And they know that you belong to me?"

She grew suddenly rigid, and Van Puyster hastily corrected himself. "I mean that you are my fairy godmother."

"Yes," said the fairy, sadly.

Mr. Van Puyster turned about in obvious mental perturbation.

"Look here," he said at length, "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but if you really belong to the family I don't want you to queer me. I wish you would allow me to give you a presentable wand."

The old lady started so violently that she almost fell from the fender into the fire.

"Why," she gasped, "that wand was made for me by the King of the Fairies."

"Well," said Van Puyster, brutally, "he made a damn bad job of it. That isn't a very good quality of gold, and the jewels in the studding are cheap, and decidedly in bad taste."

The fairy godmother tried to speak, but could only make gaspy noises in her throat, so great was her horror.

Van Puyster really felt sorry for her, but he had a duty to perform, and went on relentlessly:

"For the sake of my own standing in the community, I think that I have a right to ask you not to wear such shocking bad gowns."

"This is the garb of the fairies," she protested, faintly.

"That may be true, all right, but there is no excuse for it's not fitting across the shoulders."

With a murmured apology Mr. Van Puyster turned her about on the fender.

"You see it's dowdy, undeniably dowdy, with all that skimpy gilt trimming. The skirt does not hang and the panniers don't fit over the hips."

"I shall never come again!" said the fairy, in a fury.

"I am sure I have enjoyed your call very much," said Mr. Van Puyster, politely smothering a yawn, "but it would be wiser not to, perhaps. You know people will talk."

Then, glancing up, he found him-

self alone. "Well, the world moves," he murmured, comfortably, as he lighted a cigarette. "Fairies were right in the fashion once, but they've lost the gait. Why, they're no better than bounders now."



RESURGAM

I SAID to my grief, "We two must part,
Part now and for aye," I said;
So I buried it deep, deep down in my heart—
"It is dead!" I cried, "it is dead!"

As I laid it down in its burial place
It stared with threatening eyes;
As the grave closed over its mocking face,
"I shall rise," it said, "I shall rise."

And oft as I sit in the twilight gloom
My heart stands still at its fear;
For a whisper creeps through the lonely room,
"I am here," it says, "I am here."

EDITH SESSIONS TUPPER.



THE PERIL OF PRIDE

ONCE there were some very swagger people in an ultra village not far from the metropolis who decided that no society yet bunched together was exclusive enough for them. Even the Colonial Dames failed to meet the requirements. So they determined to start a new aggregation that should be the real thing.

After considerable thought they concluded that if they limited membership to direct descendants of Fernando de Soto it would be sufficiently exclusive for their fastidious tastes. "A Society of the Sons and Daughters of de Soto" was the outcome. All the best people in the village proved that they were eligible and were enrolled as charter members.

However, there was one man on the outer fringe whose proof of descent was not accepted; in short, he was blackballed. This made him angry, and he started to investigate the subject.

One day he published his findings in the local newspaper. The principal fact was this: "F. de Soto died a bachelor."

The Sons and Daughters of de Soto are now known as the Élite Euchre Club.

MORAL—There's a whole lot in a name.

G. W. WHARTON.

LOVE'S LIMITATIONS

SOME new way of loving you
 Better than I love you now
 Is the boon for which I sue.
 If you know, dear, tell me how!
 Shall I woo you but in rhyme
 All the blissful day and long,
 Seeking as a lark to climb
 Heavenward on the wings of song?

All of love's sweet story old,
 Every phrase to passion wed,
 Lips long sealed by Death have told,
 All hath many times been said!
 So to you I fain would speak
 In some language strange and new.
 Morning, noon and night I seek
 Some new way of loving you.

Men progress, they say, and yet
 Love's vocabulary stands
 Circumscribed, and still and set,
 As if bound with iron bands.
 Yet 'tis said that wondrous kind
 Fate is to the ones who woo—
 If I seek I yet may find
 Some new way of loving you.

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



UNTWISTING THE TWIST

"IT'S funny how Keggles gets twisted when he talks. The other night he was trying to explain to his wife that cigar ashes keep moths out of the carpet."

"What did he say?"

"That cigar ashes kept the carpet out of the moths."

"Well, what's the difference?"



AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

HE—I've been writing quite a few jokes lately.
 SHE—Funny jokes, or just jokes?

THE COMPANION TO VIRTUE

By Gertrude F. Lynch

DEEPLY imprinted in the feminine mind is the belief that a man never fully forgives a woman who refuses him. That in despair, desperation or weakness he may offer himself to another she admits, but that he ever forgets her, or misses an opportunity for placating his wounded self-respect by proving to her what an opportunity she has lost, is beyond her intuition and so beyond her acceptance.

Mrs. Bridewell, after three years of married life, with its ups and downs—the ups being due to her diplomatic acceptance of disappointments, and the downs to the revolt of nature against artificial control—found herself, at the end of that time, playing the rôle of deserted wife. It is easy to be a deserted wife behind the footlights; to hide the pangs of unrequited affection beneath the folds of a Doucet gown and to know that the tears of outraged morality are to be assuaged later on by lobster à la Newburg, but to be a deserted wife in the sanctity of a quiet home, where denunciation will be responded to by no gallery god, where tears are superfluous and silence and speech equally unavailing, is an entirely different matter.

Mrs. Bridewell, to her credit be it told, performed the difficult functions of her secondary part with as much artistic finish and verve as if she had been drawing a large salary, supplemented by commissions. She was always becomingly gowned, her indifference had about it no jagged edges of amateurishness, her expositions were quietly recited in full chest tones, and her sarcasms were

pointed and effective. That all these availed little was less her fault than the fault of the masculine subject toward whom Fate had decided her efforts must be directed.

Even sympathy was denied, for she read her world well enough to know that confession would be responded to by any one of her five hundred friends with terraced steps of advice, condolence, condemnation and smiles behind her back. There only remained her sole surviving relative, a maiden aunt, who had prophesied every known and a few unknown ills from the time of her timid "yes" to the chime of the wedding bells, since which time she had sat waiting expectantly, with the attitude and expression of one who knows that disappointment is impossible.

Sympathy having failed and remonstrance proved futile, it remained for Mrs. Bridewell to wait the trend of events.

One morning she looked across her cup of *café au lait* and said, slowly, with the clear accents of a wronged wife:

"You will not be home to dinner?"

Her husband smoothed his dark mustache with a firmly gripped napkin before he answered:

"My dear, I am sorry, but I have promised King Baring to go down to his country club after business; we shall have just time for a game of golf before dinner, but I'm afraid I won't be able to get back to-night."

He was always polite and suave, and the present occasion did not furnish the exception that is supposed to haunt the footsteps of every well-bred rule.

She tapped the carpet restlessly

with her foot. She knew that she was simply wasting breath by speaking, but emotion overpowered reason, as it does sometimes with a woman.

"I should think King Baring would be ashamed of himself."

He raised his eyebrows. In his case emotion did *not* overpower reason, and he determined to give her no opportunity, by careless ejaculation or question, to add her ballot to the vote that the absent are always wrong. But his eyebrows were as effective as speech, and she proceeded to enumerate in detailed succession a list of Mr. Baring's shortcomings, in regard to personal appearance, mental equipment and spiritual welfare, and ended by punctuating the last phrase with staccato heeltaps on the electric bell beneath the table. When the maid responded to the summons, she said, with emphasis:

"Call up the stable on the telephone and order a coupé to be here at eleven."

After this enigmatic ending to the conversation she reached for her letters and opened them without paying further attention to her vis-à-vis.

The incident was apparently closed, and Mr. Bridewell finished his breakfast peacefully, his digestion improved by the conversational appetizer. In fact, her words bore so close a resemblance to many that had preceded them and, in all probability, to many more that would follow in due course, that the memory of them vanished with the fall of the dining-room curtain and the sight of his wife's contemptuous face as she responded to his gay "*Au revoir*."

He took a lingering look at his finely groomed figure in the hall glass, removed a speck of dust from the lapel of his coat, and drawing a new pair of tan gloves from his pocket, remained a moment on the doorstep drawing them on, inhaling the morning air with pronounced satisfaction and adjusting his body preparatory to stepping forth with the jaunty step assumed for the public eye.

On his way he stopped at the chemist's and toyed with a "pick-me-up,"

his real object being the use of the telephone in the far corner. Having paid his due, he started for the door, then, with an elaborate attempt at artifice that deceived no one—there being no one to deceive but the clerk, who was busily compounding a prescription—he sauntered to the bell and rang up a fashionable apartment house not a mile away from his own home.

If the clerk had been listening—which he wasn't—he might have heard him say, "Ah, Héloïse, good morning. Mrs. Bowen not up yet? So sorry. Well, tell her I'll be sure to come; shall take the 4.15 train from this side. Good-bye."

He placed a dime on the counter, then stood a moment at the door looking up and down the street to catch the eye of a pretty girl, not *a* pretty girl but *any* pretty girl, and seeing no one who satisfied his requirements, started for the "L."

Going down town a thought of King Baring crossed his mind, and he smiled broadly, a smile that might have been interpreted, "Oh, King's a good fellow, a thoroughbred; he won't tell—what he doesn't know."

King Baring was the man Mrs. Bridewell had refused; who had been introduced to her husband by her, and who, it would be impossible to convince her, was not seeking to alienate the said husband's affections.

She had determined on her line of action in regard to him. She intended to have it out, not some indefinite time in the future, but now, this very morning. She would let him see that she understood and appreciated the unmanliness of his act; she would shame him from its consummation, if possible. She would not wait for him to evade appointments and make excuses, and if she did not succeed in accomplishing her purpose she would at least make him suffer a bad quarter of an hour in reality, and several more in reminiscence.

King Baring was at his desk, a big, oblong affair littered with papers and letters, everything on top, so "he would know where it was." He had

just rung up on the telephone and sent the office boy of a friend, one Henry Platt, to tell the latter to come to the wire.

It was while he held the receiver in his hand that his own boy marshaled in Mrs. Bridewell.

He rose, glancing as he did so at the yellow-covered book before him with its title, "Law Reports and Session Laws—State of New York." He had just been reading some decisions in divorce cases, and instantly gave his own interpretation to her visit. Lately he had heard more or less about Russell Bridewell and a certain widow.

"Didn't think he was such a fool," was his mental comment.

He had the true masculine belief that a man's wisdom is shown, not by keeping out of mischief, but by keeping the knowledge of it from the public ear.

He stepped forward with hand outstretched, noting with the eye of a connoisseur her grace and charm.

She sank into the chair indicated, while he swung his own into the focus of her blue eyes. It was a long time since he had felt the thrill of their glance; to tell the truth, he had long since forgotten that they held a thrill for him. The old affair had not cut as deeply as might have been imagined from its whilom fervor. The proposal, which he had deemed a fitting complement to a moonlight association, with the scent of some overhanging honeysuckle and a star-studded sky as accessories, had long since been lost in a limbo of other proposals, some refused, some accepted, but none of which had detained him by a moment's afterthought.

She pressed two dry lips together before she began.

"I don't suppose you have any idea what brought me here, Mr. Baring."

There was a time when she had called him King, but she kept that in reserve if dignity, indignation and an appeal to his honor should fail.

He noted the hidden suggestion in her tone that she knew he did know

what had brought her, yet he hesitated for fear of making a false move.

She looked at him with scornful eyes.

He felt the scorn, but believed he was receiving it as proxy. "Her husband must have gone the pace," he thought, "else she wouldn't look that way at the mere thought of him."

He waited, believing the slight pause due to the difficulty of approaching the subject. He had had considerable legal experience, and realized that it is hard for a woman to expose domestic infelicities.

He would help her.

"I trust that nothing has happened to Russell?"

He was overwhelmed by a torrent of reproaches.

"Anything happened to Russell? You know better. Haven't you made him promise to go to your old country club to-night, just as you've dragged him away from me, time after time, for the last six months?"

He had seen Russell once during the time specified. They had exchanged monosyllabic greetings in passing.

The telephone bell rang, and he turned to it, for the first time, without a muttered oath.

Platt was at the other end of the wire, and sang out, blithely, "What is it, old man?"

He had rung him up with the intention of asking him to go with him that night to the country club, which Mrs. Bridewell had just denominated as superannuated.

He thought quickly. "Awfully busy, Platt. Will call you up in half an hour."

He would have laughed any other time at Platt's telephonic soliloquy, but he felt the situation tense enough to blunt his sense of humor.

His face had not regained its normal complexion when he turned it to Mrs. Bridewell.

So Russell had used him as a scapegoat for his wrongdoing, and instead of seeking a divorce, she had come to

bullyrag him for acting as tempter to an unwilling man!

It is always more difficult to act guilty when innocent than innocent when guilty, for habit has rendered the latter, in most cases, not impossible of achievement.

What could he say? Tell her the truth? He was too much a gentleman to save himself at the expense of her belief in her husband's fidelity.

She felt she had cornered him, and watched him as a cat does a mouse.

He said probably the weakest thing he could have said:

"You shouldn't be too hard on Russell, Mrs. Bridewell. You know we all have a lot of human nature in our make-up."

Why didn't he open the top drawer of his desk and offer her a chocolate nougat?—it would amount to the same thing. She was in no mood to be soothed as one soothes a refractory child.

She flung out her hand as if repelling something tangible.

"It is unworthy, unmanly of you to seek such a revenge."

Revenge, revenge? Why should she accuse him of revenge? He galloped through sentimental reminiscences with the speed of a winning horse.

"Oh, yes, of course." He recalled the Summer night and his fervent love-making. Some of his proposals he could never understand in retrospect, yet looking at her, unmarred by her domestic unhappiness as a butterfly that dries its wings after a shower, he felt not only justified but amazed at his own discrimination.

Surely she could not believe that he had treasured her timid "no," not even sure of itself, all these years! Women were poor creatures, and their mental obliquities made it hard to treat them straightforwardly.

Until she referred to it he had forgotten his proposal. Here again the truth might hurt. To convince one's self that a man is burning for revenge, and then to learn that he has forgotten its supposed cause, would be humiliating to the most retiring of the gentle sex.

His innocence of this double charge made him still more uneasy, and his mental attitude was manifested in his face. He could neither explain nor deny, for if Russell insisted on placing on his shoulders the odium of his absences, he would only succeed in adding the broken vow to the list of other offenses in the regard of the woman facing him, who refused to be placated by generalities, and before whom the legal mind, which can so convincingly slide over the focal point to bring some trifle into undue prominence, was powerless.

There only remained for him to act the brute, which he did.

"What is it you want me to do?" He spoke tersely, ignoring her sentimental allusion, in the tone of a man whose time is limited, and who is lacking in interest toward the speaker and the subject.

She flushed at its inhumanity.

"I want you to promise that you will let Russell alone; that you won't ask him to go with you and refuse if he comes to you—won't you, *King*?"

He had intended to promise anything she asked, no matter how absurd, and to promise it in words that would simply silence her by their coldness and insincerity. But the *King* touched him, and in spite of himself he showed a sudden impulse of sympathy.

"I promise."

"And you won't take him to the club to-night?"

"No, Mrs. Bridewell, I won't take him to the club, and if he insists on going, well, he will have to go alone."

She looked at him searchingly, with some lingering doubt. "I believe you." She really didn't, but she intended to try.

He escorted her to the door and held her hand a little longer than was absolutely necessary in business hours, then returned to his room and proceeded to kick the varnish off the lower part of his chair.

Of course Russell would insist that he *had* been to the club with him, and of course she would conclude that he had broken his word.

Well, it was better that she should believe *him* an unmitigated cad than know her husband was one.

Mr. Bridewell hurried into the waiting-room of the Long Island depot with a wilted collar. If there was anything in the world he hated it was a wilted collar. He wondered if Mrs. Bowen, the dashing widow, would notice it, and tried to reassure himself by plate glass reflections as he passed the windows.

It was an afternoon in early Fall which seemed to have stored up the vindictiveness of the past season and to pour it forth in concentrated wrath. The morning had been cool and he had dressed fitly; he did not dare to return home and his bag contained only a modest equipment of linen and his dress suit. He had been too busy to get lunch; had been caught in a blockade, extricated himself with difficulty, taken a cab, been overcharged and then insulted by the driver, remembered that he had left his new Fall overcoat in the cable car, and in addition to these misfortunes had met Reynolds, whose wife was an intimate friend of his. Reynolds had said to him, "Oh, going out of the city? Where to, old man?" He could not say King Baring's country club, for he was pointed in an opposite direction, so he had compromised by shaking a jocose finger and winking broadly.

It was apparently an off day with Reynolds—he was a stock broker—and he refused to notice the suggestion of mystery. Instead he remarked: "If your wife is alone, I guess Mrs. R. and I'll run over to see her this evening." That meeting opened possibilities for future entanglements on which he dared not allow his mind to dwell.

The temperature of the waiting-room was a cross between the infernal regions and a mustard plaster. There were fifteen babies protesting against the burden of life in melodies ranging from the keyless ensemble of a Metropolitan Opera House chorus in crescendo to the diminuendo of a Hun-

garian band in so-called Bohemia. People seemed to stick together in passing and then to protest against each other's existence as if it were a personal insult.

Bridewell chose his corner, glowering. He had to sit in a corner for fear of another unlucky meeting, and he hated corners. This one was particularly unpleasant owing to international complications in the guise of an Italian bootblack and a German frau with seven small *fräuleins*.

It is strange how personal discomfort will bring into the calcium rays of truth the failings of one's friends and one's own shortcomings. Now, a fact that he had thrust into the dusty pigeonholes of his mind emerged into the full sunlight of consciousness. He was tired of this intrigue. He was weary of telling a woman whom he did not love and never had loved that he adored her. He was tired of acting the dutiful attendant, of being placated by unmeaning flatteries and fruitless promises, of being played off against other men, of being sent for at inopportune times and turned aside at will; of striving for excitement in situations that were only banal.

He pictured his journey, a dusty ride, an uncomfortable room in a crowded hotel, a lonely dinner, the usual note from the usual servant saying that she had just learned of his arrival and would he join a little party at her friend's house, stolen tête-à-têtes interrupted always at critical moments, his badly played rôle of mouse against her carefully practiced one of feline.

How she had flattered and cajoled him into helping her forget the inroads of time, by keeping the ranks of her admirers free from a single vacancy which, like the ring about an oak's trunk, denoted a certain advance toward the resistlessness of old age!

His acquaintance with her had been one of shaded lamps; never had they companioned in the searching light of day; always the carefully adjusted veils, the dim rooms, the insincerities of speech and manner.

He caught a glimpse of himself just then in the window fronting him; it did not add to his peace of mind.

After all, respectability might not be stimulating, but it was comfortable. He thought how pretty his wife had looked that morning, of the mutinous look on her face as she had ignored his farewell, the atmosphere of safety and elegance he had left. There was only one moment before the train started. He stooped and smoothed the face of one of the chubby *fräuleins* who insisted on using his knee for a resting place. The trainman was calling for the last time; should he go?

He hesitated; underneath the carefully trimmed mustache the lips, indecisive usually, formed a new line. He heard the gate slam without moving.

He would send a telegram to Mrs. Bowen, who had probably taken the earlier train.

No; why should he send her a telegram? What did he care what she thought? The telegram might be a leading string. He turned relentlessly away and strode out of the station into the free air beyond.

About an hour before this happened Mrs. Bowen, in a charming *négligée* of rose muslin and Valenciennes, adjusted a blue pillow under her ruddy locks, dropped one hand over the side of the couch so that Héloïse might polish the filbert-shaped nails, and with the other turned the pages, languidly, of the latest romantic novel.

The crystal clock on the bracket overhead chimed the half-hour, and she looked vexed.

"Better send a telegram to those people, Héloïse, and tell them I'm too ill to come."

"Yes, madame."

"It is warm, Héloïse."

"Deadly, madame."

She arranged the cushion again, and read on.

Presently Héloïse returned, sank on the footstool and reached for the plump hand.

"You remember, madame, Mr. Bridewell, he telephoned that he would take the 4.15 train."

"No, I'd forgotten; so he did. The poor fellow'll have a dusty ride. Hand me the paper-knife, Héloïse. I hate to cut leaves!"

A minute passed.

"Héloïse."

"Yes, madame."

"Perhaps you had better telephone Mr. Drake, and if you get him at his office ask him to come and dine with me."

"Yes, madame."

"I like a man who is sure of himself," Mrs. Bowen thought, as Héloïse darted off to obey the last order. "Bridewell's always wondering if he's having a good enough time to pay him for the trouble he's taken. You can see it in his face. Then he's always wanting to take you to out-of-the-way places to dine, for fear somebody'll see him, and he hasn't sent me any flowers for a week. That's the worst of married men—their home life interferes so with their duties. Now, Drake's a dear; of course, his not being married makes some difference, but I have the greatest faith in him; I believe if he had fifty wives he'd be just as nice. What did Mr. Drake say, Héloïse?"

"Delighted. Said he'd take you driving after dinner."

Mrs. Bowen returned to her book with one last remark:

"I don't believe, Héloïse, I'll bother with Mr. Bridewell any more. If he comes again just say I'm out, will you?"

"Yes, madame."

At his ring the neat maid opened the door, and taking his bag, preceded him up the stairs, at the top of which Mrs. Bridewell greeted him with a welcoming smile, as if nothing had ever happened to alienate them. She did not express any surprise at his appearance, saying only, in accents that soothed his tired nerves like a lullaby:

"Your bath's all ready, dear, and

don't bother with any stiff linen; just put on your flannel coat."

Tired, hot, cross and disgusted with himself as he was, he threw his arms about her and kissed her as he hadn't kissed her for many months.

"From the many to the one—oh, so many!"

It was while Mrs. Bridewell was adjusting the elements of the French dressing, not her own, but of the romaine salad, that she said:

"I didn't really believe until I saw you that King Baring would keep his word. A man who would do what he's done doesn't offer much hope for reformation."

"King Baring?" He stopped himself in time.

She eyed him expectantly. "I'd just like to know what he did tell you; not the whole truth, I'll wager. Catch a man doing *that*! If you could have seen his face when I walked into his office!"

"Let me hear your side first, dear. If it doesn't tally—well, what can you expect of a mere man?"

He avoided her glance by changing his position.

She was dying to tell the story, and only omitted one incident, a trifling one—the "King" which had rolled so glibly from her lips at the psychologic moment.

"Now what did he say? You might as well tell me."

"Nothing different, I assure you. You mustn't be too hard on King. Think of the temptation!"

She didn't like his attempt to placate her on that subject, but she was learning love's wisdom and kept silent.

Later she reclined in an easychair while he sat at her feet and read Browning.

He had just finished the lines—

Every man, the meanest of his creatures, has two soul-sides. One to face the world with, one to show a woman when he loves her—

replacing Browning's punctuation with his own, consisting of three hand clasps in quick succession, when she said, with feminine irrelevance:

"Don't think me hard and cruel, Russell; I'm neither, but I can't bear to think of King Baring marrying that sweet little niece of Mrs. James. They say he is terribly devoted. A man who has no regard for the sanctity of the home, who can treasure feelings of revenge for years, isn't just the one to take a young girl's life into his keeping, now, is he?"

Russell tried to expostulate, but she was firm.

"Of course I know your weakness for him, dear, and your man's point of view, but I must do my duty and tell Mrs. James all."

And she did.



HELEN OF TROY

TWO worlds, sweet Helen, claim thee as their star;
To each as rightfully dost thou belong.
Thy loves, that whelmed the ancient world in war,
Have flooded all the modern world with song.

ST. GEORGE BEST.



SET AN EXAMPLE

MADGE—Would you call her a leader of fashion?

MARJORIE—Well, she has done all she could to make divorce popular.

FULFILMENT

ACROSS the world, for all these many years,
 I have pressed onward—only seeking thee;
 My scrip aloof with hopes and doubts and fears,
 My harp attuned to sing thine empery,
 Dreaming that each who paused to hear my lay
 Or bought thy praises with a niggard hand
 Might, having seen thy face in some far land,
 Drop speech thereof to guide me on my way.

And ever, when I learned of one most fair,
 Herward I journeyed, singing as I went.
 What though I sang of gold or raven hair,
 Of brown or azure orbs omnipotent?
 Was not thy soul the soul of all my song?
 Wouldst thou not know thy soul, and show it grace?
 So, when each knew not, ere I saw her face,
 I turned aside and lost me in the throng.

And now, bespent, despairing of my quest,
 Thee have I found, sweet lady of my dream.
 Alas, poor harp! how shall thy voice attest
 Worship that might a seraph's lyre beseem?
 Dear friend, old comrade, canst thou bid her know
 Thy halting measure for her lover's praise—
 The prayer that has consumed him all his days—
 The weary search—the wandering to and fro?

Yet this is but a thing of small account,
 Seeing that I have found thee at the last.
 Be mine the ramparts of thy heart to mount,
 Or 'neath their towers lie slain and overcast.
 Just to have seen and loved thee for an hour,
 Death were therefor a little price to pay.
 Dying or living I shall go my way,
 Telling my gladness to each bird and flower.

A troubadour, I seek the Court of Love
 To beg its Queen, for my great passion's sake,
 To seal me forth her judgment, that I take
 One golden memory to heaven above.

DUFFIELD OSBORNE.



DRIVEN DESPERATE

SHE—How did you come to marry your first love?
 HE—I was jilted by a girl worth half a million.

THE PICTURE OVER THE MANTEL

By Justus Miles Forman

LIVINGSTONE and I finished our bout with the foils at Clermontel's shortly before one o'clock and came out of the little Rue Coëtlogon into the noise and hurry of the Rue de Rennes. Here we quarreled fiercely about where we should lunch, for I wanted to drive out to the Bois and lunch like a Christian at d'Armenonville, and Livingstone insisted on going to Lavenues's, in the Place de Rennes.

Of course he had his way. He always does. And we lunched, on the whole, very decently at Lavenues's, after which I left Livingstone under the awning of the terrace, drinking coffee and making eyes at the female friend of a perturbed St. Cyr officer.

I crossed the Boulevard Montparnasse to the studio, for I'd some idea of going out to the Tir aux Pigeons in the Bois. There would probably be a man there whom I wanted to see, a chap I used to know in Vienna.

It was about two o'clock, I should fancy, when I finished dressing, said good-bye to the photograph on the big, gray card that stands alone over the mantel, and went out and waved my stick at a passing *fiacre*.

It was a gorgeous day, full of yellow sunshine that was not too hot; full of the smell of Summer, of the trees that lined the street, of a vague, faint perfume from heaven knows where—for it was July, and months late for the chestnuts and lilacs or even acacias—a perfume that came on the little breeze and filled one's head, made one take long, deep breaths, made one infinitely glad to be alive and to be in paradise, or at least in the best mundane substitute obtainable.

Are the Summer smells of Paris richer, rarer, sweeter than anywhere else in the world? Have the Boulevard trees a fresher fragrance? Has the sprinkled dust a keener aroma? Are the passing whiffs from an old, high-walled garden, or from the overflowing crimson and azure and white of a florist's doorway more intoxicating, more blood stirring? I don't know. To me they must ever seem so. Perhaps there is something beyond odors, subtler—if that be possible—that gets into one's veins, conquers one and draws one back to Paris wherever one may be—"the East a-callin'."

We spun along the Boulevard Montparnasse and over the Pont des Invalides and up to the Étoile and out the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, while I, with the Summer in my veins, lay back on the cushion and, I fear, thought most sentimentally on the picture over the mantel.

Out by the Porte I changed my mind about the Tir aux Pigeons and told the *cocher* to drive over to the Allée de Longchamps, where I paid him off and set out to stroll.

There was the usual throng of loungers, old gentlemen with military-looking frock coats, bourgeois families, each with a progeny that would seem to give the lie to the story of a non-increasing population and the ever-present *non-nons* in gorgeous ribbons.

I sat on a wooden bench for a half-hour, smoking cigarettes and, alas! thinking of the picture over the mantel. Then two enthusiastic young persons began spinning tops about my boots, and I retired. In France one spins tops with the aid of a furi-

ously lashing whip, not with a mere harmless cord. I strolled back from the Allée along the network of devious and unfrequented paths that make a sort of labyrinth among the trees and thick shrubbery between the avenues and riding ways. I had gone in some distance, till the beat of horses' hoofs, the screams of children and the calls of nurses were blended into a far-away hum, when very suddenly someone, just beyond the wall of shrubbery that parted my little path from the next, screamed several times for help. The voice was a woman's, and strangely enough, she was screaming "Help!" in good English, though occasionally varying it by an "*Au secours!*"

I suppose there is some penalty for trampling over and through flowering shrubs, but I do not believe I seriously injured those I got through so quickly.

What I saw on the other side was nothing particularly strange or blood-curdling—merely a woman, a girl, rather, struggling against the over-ardent advances of that familiar type of male beast, the middle-aged *marcheur*, the sort that sits under the awnings of the principal cafés and ogles the women who pass, the sort with whom nothing feminine is safe, to whom every petticoat is natural prey.

I take no pride whatever in referring to the very thorough mauling which this animal received at my hands; no pride, since he was shorter than I by a good many inches, sodden by virtue of his manner of life, and, moreover, fat. I pounded him because I was angry and because, of course, he needed it. I had no hope whatever of impressing on him the fact that he had been guilty of a wrong.

The girl had recovered her fallen sunshade, straightened her hat, and was standing with both hands to a panting breast when, leaving the somewhat disheveled Frenchman in a heap on the turf, I turned to face her. I met her eyes, and on my soul, I was near to joining the Frenchman.

If he had chosen to rise just at that moment and smite me, I couldn't have lifted a hand.

I think neither of us made a movement or uttered a sound for a long time. The girl, with her hands at her breast, stood there flushed and panting, trembling a little from her shock, and I—why, I also stood there flushed and panting, not from my work with the Frenchman—that was poor business—but for other reasons, flushed and panting and trembling a little from *my* shock. On the turf, at some distance, the Frenchman rolled and pressed his hands to his sodden face and moaned. But I—I stood like a fool and stared, and the heart inside me raced and stopped dead and leaped into my throat and raced again. What silly asses we are, the coolest of us, when Fate takes the freak to play us a momentous trick! Oh, I have lain awake many a night since that time thinking over just how I should have shown my mettle by rising to the occasion, just what I should have done, how I should have taken off my hat and dropped my eyes before her beautiful face and bowed low, very low, and said: "Miss Berkeley, I don't know what virtuous or pious act I have ever committed to deserve this good fortune, but of all the days God has given me I must always count this one the happiest, since I've been able to serve you a little. Perhaps it's because I have loved you so long. Though that is, after all, reward enough in itself without this."

But all I actually did was to stare into her eyes, trembling absurdly, and say again and again in a whisper that she must have heard: "You—you!" and again and again: "You—you—you!"

She was the first of us to recover—to my shame—and came up to me, still shaking from her fright. She placed her two hands on my arm, and said, in that sweet, soft voice that I knew so well: "Oh, how can I ever thank you? I owe you more than—than my life. Will you take me away, please? Oh, I thought no one

would ever hear me! I've never been so frightened! Please, will you take me away?"

She looked over her shoulder at the man writhing on the ground, and for a moment I thought she was going to break down into hysterics or something like that. The prospect nearly gave me hysterics myself.

We moved away up the path, but there came a scuffle behind us and a torrent of very unparliamentary French. I turned about, and there was my late antagonist on his feet at last, but with a very much damaged face. It pleased me. When I could make a little reason out of his flow of language—on my word, it wasn't language for a lady's ears at all—I found that he demanded my blood, to be yielded under tortures most terrible. He flourished a card under my nose and screamed to heaven. So I gave him my own card and told him I should be at home in an hour—his pasteboard was rather impressive when one came to read it—and hurried my charge away.

We took a short cut to the Allée de Longchamps, and I put Miss Berkeley into a waiting *fiacre*. "If you don't mind," said I, "I would a little rather see you safely home. There's just the chance that the beast might follow you."

"Please do," she begged. "We're at the Continental." So I got in beside her and gave the *cocher* the address. Miss Berkeley lay back among the cushions for a few moments, making the pluckiest fight imaginable for self-control. And she won, too, God bless her.

"Don't mind me," she said, after a little, "I'm all right now. I haven't been so—so badly unstrung since I can remember. I was just walking about in those little paths. I thought they were quite safe enough, when I met that—that man, and he took—hold of me and tried—ah, I couldn't have escaped him much longer." And she turned to me the face I'd stood looking into and talking secrets to so many hours as it

looked down from my mantel; that I'd lain awake so many nights thinking of and worshipping.

"No man ever did so much for me," she said, with a little low thrill in her voice. "I can't thank you—words are such poor things. You'll have just to let me be grateful to you all my life. Oh, it must be splendid to be so big and strong!"

"Oh, I say," I cried—very red in the face, I've no doubt, for I hate praise—"don't, don't take it that way. And for heaven's sake, don't give me credit for knocking over that cur. He was poor stuff, you know. Please don't think," I went on, quietly, "that I undervalue being of service to you, Miss Berkeley—" she looked up in a flash at the name; I suppose I had no right to call her by it—"for, as a matter of fact, there's nothing on God's green earth that I wouldn't give to do anything for you, even the littlest thing, but—but—well, you see, you paid me in advance for anything I could do by the—pleasure—I'll say pleasure—there ought to be bigger words—you have given me so long."

"What do you mean?" asked the girl, looking up at me with round eyes. "And what did you mean in the Bois by crying 'You, you, you!' under your breath?"

"I mean your acting," said I. "It has meant—well, a good deal to me. It has shown me what a girl, a woman, can be. I didn't know before."

"Oh," said the girl. Then: "Thank you," she added, after a little. It wasn't quite a conventional expression; I think she meant it.

"And you?" she asked, presently. "What are you doing in Paris? Are you a traveler, like father and me? You can't live here, or you wouldn't have seen—my acting."

"Oh, I live here about half the time," said I. "I'm in America a good deal. I write little tales in a diletante sort of fashion, big ones, too, occasionally, and make pictures for them. People are fairly decent about the things."

"Will you tell me your name?" she asked. "You know mine already."

I told her.

"What?" she cried, softly, "you, you? Why, you wrote 'The King's Heart!'" And she looked up with eyes that were the sweetest praise ever given me.

"Do you know," she went on, "I have always thought that 'The King's Heart' would make a tremendously fine play? Didn't you have that in mind when you wrote it?"

I admitted the crime.

"The girl in 'The King's Heart,'" mused Miss Berkeley, "has always seemed curiously familiar to me, lovelier, of course, than anyone I know, but familiar some way, I don't know how or why."

"That," said I, looking into her eyes, "is not at all remarkable."

The eyes showed a sudden, startled gleam, then something else, then a divine softness. Then they dropped, and the loveliest face in the world flushed deeply from chin to soft brown hair, and bent to hide itself.

"Do you mean—?" she murmured, "you don't mean—?" But she left the sentence unfinished, and fell to folding and stroking the sunshade on her knees.

"You look shockingly young to have written novels and things," she said at length.

I considered this unkind. "Oh, I don't know," I cried, indignantly, "I'm four years out of my 'varsity, a good twenty-six. And besides, I have written but one novel and not so many other things. Anyhow, I'm four or five years older than you. Aren't you shockingly young to be a star with a reputation in two countries?"

The girl laughed. "Oh, well," she protested, "I was, after a fashion, born on the stage, you see. I come of stage people. No, it's not remarkable at all."

Then she was silent again for a while. I fancied she was thinking of that novel.

"Why," she demanded, after a long time, "did you and that—that

brute exchange cards? And what did you mean with all your talk about friends, and that sort of thing?"

"Oh," I explained, thoughtlessly, like a fool, "he wants his satisfaction, of course."

She turned to me swiftly and caught my arm. Her eyes were full of terror.

"You—you're going to fight him?" she cried. "You're going to fight a duel?"

Then I saw what an ass I'd been, and I tried to laugh it off, and told her French duels never hurt anyone, but she wouldn't be deceived.

"Why, you may be killed!" she said—I'd have been killed twice over for the look in her eyes just then.

"You must let my father go on with it," she said, finally. "You have done enough, heaven knows. It's his place to defend me. You must let him do it."

"Not I!" I cried, stoutly. "It's my affair. I tell you it won't amount to anything. But no one shall get it away from me, anyhow. I've just a little more punishment to deal out to that chap before I'm through."

We were crossing the Place de la Concorde by this time, and soon we turned the corner of the Rue Castiglione and drew into the court of the Continental.

I helped her out of the *fiacre* and she stood looking into my eyes.

"I won't have you killed," she said. Her hand lay in mine a moment. "If a girl's hopes and prayers can bring you through safely you'll not be harmed. When will it probably be?"

"I shall do myself the honor of calling to see if you've quite recovered by to-morrow afternoon," said I.

"That means it will be in the morning," murmured the girl to herself. "Ah, I shall be waiting—and hoping."

I climbed back into the *fiacre* and drove rattling across the Tuileries and over the river and up the narrow Rue du Bac, with a whole choir singing *glorias* and *jubilates* in my head. Fight? I'd have fought all Paris and gone to the battle with a laugh. I

thought of her beautiful eyes and of how they had looked at me, and on my faith, I wonder I didn't die of heart disease!

Crossing the Rue de Sèvres I happened on the very man I wanted to see, or at least one of the two men—Paul Hervieu, as fine a young Frenchman as ever did his military service. I gathered him into the *fiacre* and explained things swiftly while we whirled up the Rue de Rennes to the Boulevard Montparnasse and the studio.

Once at home we crossed the court to Livingstone's atelier, and somewhat to our shock found that gentleman in, refereeing a fight between Jimmy Rogers's bulldog and a large and able-bodied cat belonging to the *concierge*. He came across to my studio at once and we talked the matter over.

"Of course he'll challenge," said Livingstone, in great delight. "That will give you your choice of weapons. Paul and I will try to make it sharpened foils; failing that, swords."

There came a knock at the door, and two very solemn Frenchmen entered.

"I'll go play with the cat and the dog," said I, and left the four of them together.

I have no wish to dwell on what occurred the next morning at sunrise. I take no silly pride in it. It was not even good sport. My mind holds most vividly the rising at an unchristian hour, the long three or four mile drive in a cool, sweet, gray morning, through streets deserted save by a swaggering, wide-breeched *ouvrier* or a chance carter with his great leather sombrero and his long whip, the meeting at the edge of a certain wood with a small party of formal and excessively polite gentlemen, and half an hour later the long drive back to the city.

The Frenchman was perhaps a bit more formidable with a sword in his hand than he had been the day before, for every Latin is a swordsman by inheritance and training, but forty years of debauchery make a dull eye

and a poor wrist. I easily ran him through the right shoulder. It was a matter of punishment, as I looked at it—after having received, by my own absurd carelessness, a dragging scratch, like that of a good-sized pin, across one cheekbone. It was done by chance, on the recovery from a parried *riposte*. So much for a very foolish business.

In the afternoon at three o'clock I presented my somewhat marred countenance at the Hôtel Continental. I made a turn through the glass-faced palm corridor, thinking that *she* might be there, and ran on her father, who was on the lookout for me—a merry old gentleman with a handsome face and a god-like figure. Did I say "old?" He's not above middle age and looks less. For years he had been familiar to me from across the footlights.

He greeted me very warmly and said a great many silly things about my service to his daughter, and congratulated me on coming out of it so nicely. Well, at any rate, I'd made a friend of him for life, and that fact was not to be despised.

"Evelyn's waiting for you up stairs in a great state of mind," he said at length. "I mustn't keep you any longer. I'll just show you the rooms and then I've got to go over to 'Henry's bar' to see a man." We went up to their suite, and he pushed open the door and said: "Here comes the conquering hero," and went off down the corridor with a jolly laugh.

The girl came swiftly across the room and took my hand, looking up into my face.

"You're not hurt?" she cried, in a little breathless voice. "Oh, you're not hurt?" And I turned very red with sheer delight, and became, of course, immensely confused and quite idiotic, but she dragged me over to the windows and looked at that miserable scratch across my cheekbone.

"Oh, did he do that you to you?" she mourned, like a grieving angel. "It isn't a bit pretty—I mean—I don't mean that it looks—bad, you

know," she cried, hastily. "On the whole, I—I rather like it," she added, inspecting me with her head on one side. "What did you do to him?"

"Oh, I made a little hole in him," said I. "Are you all fit again after your fright? That's the real point, you know."

"I shall be now," she declared. And I, like a fool, turned red with delight again.

"You've got to stay and dine with us to-night," she said, presently. "If you like you can run home and dress, after a while—after a very long while—and come back again. We'll go over to Voisin's or Larue's."

Then for a time neither of us spoke, while she sat looking out of the window with a little half-smile on her lips, and I—of course I watched her face, feasted on every creamy tint of it, reveled in every sweet, firm line from her round throat to her soft brown hair, and wished that the sun might break into the window for a moment, only a little moment, to wake that light brown to gold, as it had done yesterday all the way from the Bois de Boulogne to the Rue Castiglione.

I suppose her eyes are the loveliest thing about her, though, by my soul, it's hard business choosing, and they were turned from me now. Ah, but didn't I know what they could say?—how they could soften and darken and grow infinitely deep and tender and sweet, till one quite lost one's self there? I hadn't loved them all this time for nothing. But though her eyes were turned from me, that soft downward curve of cheek and chin was left, and her little nose, that started out so bravely high and fine, and stopped so soon. It's the most ridiculously pretty nose a girl ever owned. Sometimes she wrinkles it when she wants to show a lofty scorn. I wish she wouldn't. I think she knows it is tantalizing. And her mouth—I don't dare try to talk about her mouth, but the upper lip is short, and curls a bit, and has quite a deceptive and pathetic droop at the corners; and when she is thinking about something

she cares for, or when she is very earnest, and those eyes of hers grow soft and dark, why, then her lips part a little and the droop at the corner goes deeper—but I said I wouldn't talk about her mouth.

She turned her eyes back to me. "I have been thinking of something," she smiled.

"Come, now, be generous," said I, "tell a chap."

"What did you mean," she began, "yesterday in the *fiacre*, by saying that my acting had shown you what a girl could be, and that you didn't know before? It's such a vague way of putting things."

"It's a clearer way of putting things than if I should go into details," said I. "I've known for a long time that a girl could be beautiful and lovely and tender and all that, for I've been falling mildly in love with girls—dozens of them—from the day I commenced on the young person in the white cap who pushed me about in a carriage. But when I came to know you—across the footlights—I found I had been all those years sadly mistaken about what beauty and loveliness and the rest were. It was something of a revelation. I've been a good bit of a loafer, not of much account in any way; I've done precious little as an excuse for living, but I give you my word of honor that if it weren't for you I should never have done anything at all. What you've shown me of a girl's wonderful possibilities for beauty, for sympathy, for—love, has waked me up. It has shamed me a bit. I'm not a loafer any more. I've worked hard for the last year or two—oh, but I say, you're making me talk like a Salvation Army recruit. All this doesn't interest you."

The girl was looking out of the window again, with her chin in her hand.

"It's impossible," said she, "that just my acting should have done all that. You must be in love with some girl. Oh, you must be. Tell me, aren't you?"

I thought my heart had stopped

permanently. On my word, I wonder it didn't.

"In love with her?" I cried, stammering. "I am in love with her. She's in everything I do or say or think. She's the breath of heaven. She's with me every hour of the day and night. In love with her? Why—why—" and I broke off, stammering again for very want of words.

"I knew it," said the girl, nodding her brown head at me with a little smile. But for some reason or other she didn't look overjoyed. "You see, you can't deceive a woman," she said, looking out of the window once more. Then I saw her face change and grow a bit puzzled. "But—but yesterday," she wondered, "your book, 'The King's Heart'—you said—I thought you meant—oh, nothing, nothing!" and she stared at the chimneypots across the street.

My heart had not stopped permanently. It was racing at a most dangerous speed. In another moment I must have done something desperate, for I was fast losing control. But I pulled together with a jerk and stood up.

"I'm going home to dress," said I. "I'll be back at six or seven, as you like, if you really want me to dine with you. It's tremendously jolly of you, you know," and somehow I got out of the room and down stairs.

"Lord Headley is coming over on to-night's Dover boat," announced Miss Berkeley at the dinner table. "A letter came from him this evening." I spilled the larger portion of a glass of Burgundy over my shirt bosom. Lord Headley had been prominent among the dozen or so well-known Englishmen and Americans to whom an enthusiastic press had, from time to time, announced Miss Berkeley's engagement.

"That'll be very jolly!" cried Berkeley *père*. "Headley's a ripping good sort of fellow! Know him?" to me. I admitted never having met Lord Headley, and noted with no joy whatever a glance of inquiry, surprise, slight confusion, and some thoughtful-

ness which was exchanged by my two companions. Indeed, during the rest of the evening Miss Berkeley was undeniably *distracte* and the least bit nervous. The atmosphere was a trifle charged. I went home early.

If there had been any means short of out-and-out boorishness by which I could have avoided keeping my engagement to lunch at the hotel the next day, I should have seized on it and stopped at home. I crossed the river in a most unwilling spirit.

They were waiting for me in the lounge, and presented me at once to Lord Headley, whom, to my disgust, I found myself liking immediately.

"Awfully glad to meet you," said he, pumping at me with vigor. "I believe my governor and yours used to be great pals a hundred years ago, shooting in Africa together, and all that."

"I believe they did," said I.

"No big game for me," continued Headley. "It's too jolly hard work. I'll take the birds. I'm not keen on jungles and lions and fevers."

I fear I was not very entertaining at luncheon. I was wondering miserably how much there might have been, how much there might yet be, in the reports of Evelyn Berkeley's engagement to Headley. Her mood of the evening before was still on her—a half-embarrassment, a sort of soberness, of uncertainty. Headley's attitude was all too obvious. It was frankly and unashamedly adoring.

I had promised to let the Berkeleys see my studio in the immediate future—why do people so love to poke about in studios?—and so I took this occasion to ask them for the next day, since they expected to cross the Channel toward the end of the week.

Headley couldn't come, had some "beastly business" to keep him, but the others promised, and I fled back across the river. I had gathered in all the day just one lone grain of comfort. With Miss Berkeley's gloves and veil, on a seat under one of the palms, I had caught sight of a copy of "The King's Heart," apparently a new copy. She must have been to Brentano's for

it. "But curiosity, merely curiosity, me boy," said I, bitterly. "It is strong in all women. Don't you go digging encouragement out of that." And I stood a long time with my elbows on the mantel, staring into the face of the picture there and asking it silly questions that it wouldn't answer. It only looked back at me, head tipped a little to one side, big eyes gazing with that grave, questioning, almost childish steadiness, lips just trembling toward a smile. Lord, Lord! how I loved it, from the rosebuds in the soft hair to the great sweep of white tulle or muslin or lace or whatever other mysterious thing that skirt may have been!

I had Jerry Livingstone come over the next afternoon, and on the Berkeleys' arrival I delivered Berkeley *père* to him with some firmness. One corner of Jerry's expressive mouth drooped for an instant.

Evelyn seemed to have left at the Continental every trace of her past mood. She was in a state of most absurd levity, fairly kittenish, and poked her dear little head into every corner and cover and recess of the place, with that way women have in bachelor quarters. I became used to it long ago in college days.

"It's all simply delightful!" she cried. "It's—it's—you don't mind my saying that it's just like a curio shop, do you?—a very nice curio shop," she pleaded, "without any sixpenny counter. What's this? This isn't antique. It looks perfectly new. Why don't you scrub that stain off the blade? You aren't a bit tidy."

I suppose my face must have gone red. I hadn't meant her to see that sword. At any rate, she stared at me an instant and then dropped the thing with a clatter and a little scream.

"It's what you—used the other day?" she faltered, rather pale. Then she picked it up again and patted it.

"It saved your life," she murmured. "Oh, but it is rather ghastly!"

She was good enough to be politely enthusiastic over the sketches and other alleged works of art about the

place—illustrative drawings, for the most part. Indeed, she was more than polite. But then, as I have said, she was in great spirits.

I was reaching down a fifteenth-century poignard from high on the wall to show her, when she suddenly disappeared. There was but one place for her to go, and I followed at once into the sleeping-room that opened on the studio. There was little to see in it—a brass bed, a curtained-off bath, a chiffonier or two, a marble mantel, and what was on the mantel.

She stood looking at the picture, her hands clasped at a quickened breast. She turned at my step. What her face held, now that I come to write it, I find I cannot say. It was very flushed. There was surprise, certainly—more than that, an astonishment, a sort of shock. I think there was no displeasure, no regret, but rather a great dawning of something quite opposite—I cannot say.

"Where did you get this? How long have you had this?" she cried, softly.

"Ever since they were taken," said I. "Ever since you commenced to star, last Autumn, and had those pictures made. I was in New York at the time. Don't be angry at me! They're for sale—anyone can buy them. Let me keep it. It's the dearest thing I own. Let me keep it. It goes everywhere with me, I—I can't do without it. It's the last thing I see at night and the first thing I see in the morning. I tell my troubles to it and my good luck, too. It's the girl I—it's the girl—" and I faltered and stammered and looked down. I couldn't meet those eyes.

"Will you lend me a pencil?" she said, very low. She took the pencil and the photograph and wrote across the broad gray margin: "To the bravest gentleman in all the world.—Evelyn Berkeley."

"We'll pretend I gave it to you," she said, with a little, unsteady laugh. "Ah, no, no; not here!" as I moved toward her.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," said I, as I sat facing the Berkeleys in the carriage, "I had a letter this morning from Mr. Freeman, the great, saying that he wanted to have 'The King's Heart' dramatized at once, and requesting me to come over in a month to revise the version before it was given to—whom do you think?—you! I am also to be present at rehearsals in September to make suggestions. There is talk of further plays. He seems in love with 'The King.'"

The girl was clapping her hands. "Oh, oh!" she cried, "it's gorgeous! simply gorgeous! Never was there such luck! Just wait till you see what I shall do with 'The King's Heart!' Oh, why don't you cheer, or something?"

"I've read the book," said Berkeley, "and it will make one of the finest plays ever put on in New York. It's an acting story. It'll fall of itself into scenes and acts." He shook my hand very heartily. "Congratulations," he said; "I envy you your future. Do you know," he went on, "I couldn't keep feeling as if I'd known that girl in 'The King's Heart!' She was curiously familiar. Of course, I couldn't place her. Queer thing!"

His daughter, very pink as to countenance, turned suddenly to admire the façade of a singularly uninteresting line of shops.

On the morrow I went to the Hôtel Continental to say good-bye, for the Berkeleys were crossing that night to England, "accompanied by the enslaved Headley, of course," said I to myself. None of them was in the lounge, so I went up to their own parlor.

She was alone there. She came across the room with her face turned up to mine, every line of it softened, its cream waking to rose. But I hardened my silly heart to it.

"Where's Lord Headley?" I asked. I tried to say it politely, naturally, just in the way of a civil commonplace, but I fear it was ill done.

"Oh, Headley's gone back to London," said she, in a rather careless tone, I thought. "He left last night." And then she looked at me with a half-humorous, half-severe eye, and shook her head reprovingly, as if I had been a naughty little boy stealing jam.

"But you're going yourself to-night," I cried, sullenly.

"We sha'n't see Headley," said she, still shaking her brown head. "He's leaving at once for Norway. We're going up the river to our houseboat," and I understood at last, though it cost me a blush of honest shame.

We sat down near the window where we had been two days before, but she did not look out at the chimneypots to-day; she looked at me, with a steadfast little smile that put a catch in my breath.

"Tell me something," she said, with that blessed little smile. "The other day and—yesterday, you hinted—you said that I had been influencing you for a long time, that I had meant a good deal to you—heaven knows why—that I had made you go to work and accomplish something. You must know that there is nothing sweeter to any woman than to be able to believe just that, to know that she has been one man's good influence, has made him. But why, during all this time you say you were in New York when I began to star—you must have been in America, in college, indeed, when I was playing little parts in my uncle's company—why didn't you try to meet me? Why didn't you let me know that—that you thought I was—nice? Why didn't you tell me that I was helping you? Ah, why did you leave it all to accident this way? Didn't you want ever to know me?"

"How could I meet you?" I broke in. "Think a moment of what I was! A good-for-nothing young chap, fresh from his 'varsity and a year or two of study—or loafing, over here. I'd no name, no reputation, no money."

"But—but your family," she cried. "Everyone knows about them!"

"My family?" said I, "what of it? Of course, they've more money than

is good for them, but that doesn't give it to me; and some position, I suppose, but it's not the sort of position I want. I had nothing at all—nothing but the right sort of birth and breeding and education. You were so infinitely above me, beyond my reach!"

"An actress!" she cried, bitterly; "a girl who has to give the very best of her, every night, to any brute who can pay for a seat; a girl whose pictures are for sale to any *marcheur* who wants to buy them and gloat over them; an actress, who has to receive silly little notes sent by silly little boys that think they're in love with her and hang about the stage door till their mammas find them out and drag them away, and probably spank them; who's annoyed everywhere she goes by things that I couldn't even tell you about; an actress above *you*?"

"Ah, but you see," I protested, "you're such a very exceptional sort of an actress. You aren't the ordinary thing in actresses at all. An actress who goes to the best teas and afternoon things in New York in the Wintertime, and spends her Summers on an English houseboat and at country houses that would make those mammas you speak of gasp, is such a very hard person to classify, also to approach. No, I swore I wouldn't come near you till I could do so with at least a little excuse of worthiness, a little beginning of success. The success is in sight now, thank God! And you see it will come through you, after all, just as its foundations have been through you. You'll make me famous with 'The King's Heart'—but oh, don't imagine that it's been easy keeping away from you! Still, I had the picture."

"Ah, the picture!" she murmured. "Oh, I'm glad you had that, I'm glad!

But don't you think—" she added, after a moment, turning a little pink, "don't you think it was a bit improper having it in that room?"

"Oh, not a bit," I assured her, hastily; "it—it was always most decorously turned to the wall when I—when it was necessary. Always!"

She looked relieved. Then for a while she said nothing, but sat smiling contentedly at something beyond me.

"I'm thinking of the work we've got to do together in September," said she.

I, too, thought of it, those days and weeks together, making perfect the thing that meant so much to both of us. I think she saw in my eyes what must have been immediately on my tongue, for she leaned over toward me quickly, with her wonderful smile and those soft eyes that were a caress.

"Ah, wait!" she whispered. "Not now, not now! Wait till we've worked and played together, till you know me. Come to me in New York—I think you must go now, for I've my things to pack. It's a month and a week, isn't it? Five weeks—not so very long. Ah, nor so very short, either! It won't seem short, believe me. I shall be thinking of you." And she put out both her slim hands to me where we were standing by the window. "It isn't good-bye," she said, softly.

I took her hands, and I'll swear they lifted a little in mine, so that I bent over them and kissed them both. They were cool and sweet to my hot face.

At the door I looked back. She was standing where I had left her, with the hands I had kissed clasped to her breast, and the sweetest, tenderest smile in all the world flushing over her beautiful face.

JUST AS HE EXPECTED

SHE—What happened when you offered to kiss her tears away?

HE—She cried worse than ever.

CENDRILLON

Par Michel Provins

LE petit salon très savamment combiné de la baronne de Noircourt, une de ces Parisiennes privilégiées et adulées dont le nom lorsqu'on le prononce est toujours précédé de la fameuse petite phrase : "La belle Mme. X. . . ." Mme. de Noircourt avait été sacrée belle *urbi et orbi* depuis longtemps déjà, depuis trop longtemps même, mais elle se cramponnait à l'épithète avec toutes les ressources d'un art féminin raffiné, et y tenait d'autant plus que la réalité, chaque jour, ressemblait un peu moins à l'adjectif.

UN DOMESTIQUE (*introduisant, dans le petit salon, M. de Rancy, un des flirts officiels de la baronne*)—Madame a été obligée de sortir quelques instants; elle m'a chargé de prier monsieur de vouloir bien prendre la peine de l'attendre.

DE RANCY (*amusé de la phrase protocolaire*)—C'est bien, Joseph, j'attendrai, j'attendrai tant qu'il faudra!

Le domestique parti, il fait quelques pas, passe devant toutes les glaces, vérifie sa cravate, rectifie sa moustache et finit par s'installer dans une bergère, où il se met à feuilleter le dernier roman à demi coupé.

GISELE (*entrant brusquement et s'arrêtant interdite devant de Rancy*)—Oh! pardon, monsieur! . . . Je ne savais pas! . . .

RANCY (*aussitôt levé et saluant la jeune fille*)—Mais je serais désolé, mademoiselle, de vous faire l'effet d'un épouvantail!

GISELE (*aimable*)—Ce n'est pas cela, monsieur, seulement je m'attendais si peu à trouver quelqu'un! . . .

RANCY—Permettez alors que ce quelqu'un se présente: M. de Rancy.

GISELE (*vivement*)—Ah! oui . . . oui . . . je sais.

RANCY—Alors, maintenant, vous pouvez prendre en toute sécurité, ce que vous veniez chercher . . . car vous cherchiez quelque chose?

GISELE—Oui, ce petit vase de Saxe, pour des fleurs que j'arrange. . .

RANCY—Des fleurs? . . . Une surprise, je parie? . . . (*Cherchant à deviner.*) Une surprise pour votre . . . votre tante?

GISELE (*étonnée*)—Quelle tante?

RANCY—Mme. de Noircourt.

GISELE (*presque triste*)—Mme. de Noircourt n'est pas ma tante . . . c'est ma mère!

RANCY (*figé*)—Votre?

GISELE—Permettez aussi que je me présente, car je vois que vous n'êtes pas du tout en pays de connaissance: Gisèle! . . . Gisèle de Noircourt! Dix-neuf ans. Par un hasard domestique, sortie du couvent, ce matin, et devant y rentrer ce soir. Vous êtes étonné?

RANCY—Dame, oui, plutôt!

GISELE—Vous ne saviez pas que maman avait une fille?

RANCY (*se reprenant*)—C'est-à-dire si . . . jusqu'à un certain point.

GISELE (*riant*)—Jusqu'à un certain point est drôle! . . . Ne mentez pas pour être aimable! Si vous aviez soupçonné mon existence, vous auriez, je suppose, été le seul . . . les précautions sont si bien prises!

RANCY—Comment?

GISELE—Oh! je ne peux pas dire! . . . C'est de l'intimité douloureuse . . . pour moi; ce n'est pas intéressant.

RANCY—Si, si, dites! . . . Pourquoi pas? Je devine que vous avez un chagrin . . . un gros chagrin, et il est évident qu'un inconnu comme moi n'a aucun droit à vous en demander le secret, mais pourtant, mademoiselle, il me semble que notre rencontre a quelque chose de plus qu'un imprévu banal, et, en tout cas, elle vous aura fait un ami!

GISÈLE—Bien vite conquis!

RANCY—Est-ce à vous à douter de votre pouvoir?

GISÈLE—Oh! pour répondre à ça, il faudrait une plus forte que moi . . . il faudrait maman!

RANCY—Par exemple!

GISÈLE—Qu'est-ce qu'elle dit quand vous lui tournez ainsi une jolie phrase?

RANCY—Mais pourquoi voulez-vous que moi?

GISÈLE—Je suis très bien renseignée, très! . . . Je ne sors pas, c'est vrai, mais j'ai des amies qui vont un peu dans le monde et beaucoup dans leurs familles où l'on cause . . . des amies que leurs parents n'éteignent pas; alors, je sais, par elles, que vous êtes un des . . . comment dirais-je? . . . un des flirts de maman? . . . C'est bien le mot, je crois?

RANCY—Eh! eh! il paraît qu'on fait pas mal de potins au couvent! Mais d'abord, il n'y a pas un mot de vrai dans toutes ces méchancetés. Et puis, il me semble que puisque dans ces méchancetés, il est précisément question de Mme. votre mère, vous ne devriez pas. . .

GISÈLE (*grave*)—Monsieur, j'aime ma mère autant qu'elle m'a permis de l'aimer; je l'aime et je la respecte! . . . Eh bien, loin de moi est l'idée, l'ombre même d'une supposition qui pourrait l'atteindre en quoi que ce soit, mais je crois aussi fermement à une chose; c'est qu'on ne peut pas être à la fois très maman et . . . très coquette!

RANCY (*étonné*)—Voilà qui est plus que de la philosophie de pension!

GISÈLE—Oui, c'est vrai . . . c'est un peu de philosophie . . . vécue!

RANCY—Vous voyez bien que vous avez un chagrin?

GISÈLE—Hélas! . . . il y a si longtemps!

RANCY (*de plus en plus intéressé*)—Si longtemps?

GISÈLE—Quand mon papa est mort, j'avais trois ans; il ne me reste de lui qu'un souvenir bien incertain, mais pourtant le souvenir de quelqu'un de très bon m'ayant entouré d'infiniment de caresses. Après lui, pendant deux ou trois années encore, on prit grand soin de ma petite personne, on me pomponnait du matin au soir et je faisais au salon, où l'on m'amenait le plus souvent possible, l'admiration de tous les amis de la maison. . . Et, il y en avait! . . . À l'âge où j'étais . . . on ne vieillit pas ses parents!

RANCY—Au contraire!

GISÈLE—Mais, dès six ans, je devins une recluse de la nursery, avec une gouvernante anglaise qui ne me quittait pas, m'amenant à ma mère seulement une minute, le matin, pour un baiser officiel.

RANCY—À quel âge êtes-vous donc entrée au couvent?

GISÈLE—À huit ans! . . . Je ressemblais, paraît-il, beaucoup à ma mère . . . trop! . . . et on commençait à le remarquer dans mes promenades avec la gouvernante. Aujourd'hui, j'ai déjà onze ans de prison . . . et je crains bien de ne pas être grâciée avant ma majorité.

RANCY—Vous ne sortez jamais?

GISÈLE—Deux ou trois heures quelquefois, pour des nécessités de toilette ou de santé.

RANCY—Mais l'été, pendant les grandes vacances?

GISÈLE—Je les passe chez des amies, ou bien en Angleterre chez des correspondants, pour me perfectionner dans la langue. . . Ah! ce que je la possède! . . .

RANCY—Le fait est qu'avec tant d'années de classe, vous devez être d'une force?

GISÈLE—Oh! j'ai tous mes brevets, et, si la chose avait été le moins du monde distinguée, je serais bachelière! . . . D'ailleurs, en pension, je ne suis plus élève; j'ai fini depuis longtemps.

RANCY—Que faites-vous?

GISÈLE—Je lis beaucoup; j'apprends la vie—non pas par ce que j'entends ou par ce que je vois, puisque je suis cloîtrée—mais je l'apprends dans les grands livres de l'humanité. Ça vaut peut-être mieux; on a toute de même la philosophie des faits sans en éprouver soi-même la désillusion et l'écœurement.

RANCY (*très impressionné et curieux de la connaître davantage*)—Vous ne serez pas indulgente pour le mari qu'on vous donnera?

GISÈLE—D'abord, je ne sais pas trop si on me donnera un mari, . . . j'aimerais mieux le choisir moi-même!

. . . Mais, au contraire, je serai très indulgente et infiniment reconnaissante à qui voudra simplement m'aimer!

RANCY—Ah! . . . (*Poursuivant*) Mais, au couvent, quand vous ne lisez pas, car enfin on ne peut pas toujours s'absorber, . . . qu'est-ce que?

GISÈLE—Je deviens professeur, j'aide à apprendre aux petites. Ça m'intéresse beaucoup! Près d'elles, je remplace un peu la maman. Ces sont surtout les toutes petites qui sont le plus privées du manque d'affection; et je sens tellement tout ce qu'il faut leur donner, par tout ce qui m'a manqué à moi.

RANCY—C'est très méritoire.

GISÈLE—Oh! pas le moins du monde; c'est mon seul plaisir et c'est ma joie! . . . D'ailleurs, c'est toujours de la joie d'être bon. Je ne suis pas encore très ferrée sur les gros défauts et les grandes vertus, mais la bonté me semble la première de toutes et capable de faire pardonner bien des choses! (*Un peu confuse.*) Oh! monsieur, c'est très mal, vous m'interrogez, je réponds et, sans m'en douter, je vous ai dit toute mon histoire!

RANCY—Elle méritait d'être dite, et je vous jure que personne ne pouvait l'écouter avec plus d'intérêt que moi.

GISÈLE—Avec plus d'intérêt? . . . À quel titre pourtant?

RANCY—Au titre de la sympathie spontanée! . . . Je ne suis pas

tout à fait aussi superficiel qu'on le raconte; sans valoir énormément, je vaudrais cependant . . . un peu mieux que cette réputation, et il n'y a pas grand miracle à ce que j'éprouve quelque émotion à vous entendre. Les jeunes filles, comme vous, d'intelligence élevée et de grand cœur . . . les créatures qui transforment l'injustice en lumière et en bonté. . .

GISÈLE—Ne me faites pas de trop beaux compliments, monsieur, je ne saurais pas me défendre! . . . On ne m'a rien appris des malices du monde.

RANCY—Ce ne sont pas des compliments!

GISÈLE—Certainement si; puisque maman m'appelle Cendrillon, c'est que je n'ai aucune qualité qui mérite d'être nommée! . . . Elle s'y connaît, maman, et me connaît mieux que vous.

RANCY—Ah! ça, je prétends que non, par exemple!

GISÈLE—Comment! Voilà dix-neuf ans. . .

RANCY—Qu'elle vous ignore!

GISÈLE—Pas tant que cela. . . (*Souriant.*) En tout cas, vous, il n'y a pas même dix-neuf minutes!

RANCY (*enthousiaste*)—C'est plus qu'il n'en faut pour une révélation . . . oui, une révélation! . . . Et je ne pouvais, je vous le certifie, en recevoir de plus inattendue et surtout de plus exquise!

GISÈLE (*simplement*)—Pardon, monsieur, voudriez-vous me passer le petit vase de Saxe? . . . Vous savez, le vase que je venais chercher?

RANCY (*lui passant le bibelot de porcelaine*)—Voici! . . . (*Lentement*) J'espère que vous me pardonneriez d'avoir été un peu indiscret?

GISÈLE (*s'éloignant*)—C'est moi surtout qui ai été . . . (*cherchant le mot*) en style de couvent, on dit: inconséquente! Je l'ai été beaucoup, beaucoup trop!

RANCY—Pourquoi trop, si vous avez confiance?

GISÈLE (*regarde Rancy bien en face, dans les yeux, puis lui tend la main*)—Oui. . . J'ai confiance! (*Sonnette électrique dans l'antichambre.*)

Oh! maman qui rentre . . . je me sauve! N'allez pas lui parler de sa . . . de sa nièce au moins? (Sérieuse) Adieu, monsieur!

RANCY (avec intention)—Au revoir, mademoiselle.

Gisèle partie. Rancy reste immobile regardant la porte par où s'est évanouie la vision de jeunesse et de charme, vision rare, que dans son scepticisme de boulevardier, il avait toujours cru impossible.

MME. DE NOIRCOURT (faisant irruption, un peu agressive)—Eh! bien, qu'est-ce qu'on me dit, vous causez avec les petites filles?

RANCY—Non . . . j'ai causé avec une jeune fille, et une jeune fille d'élite, promesse d'une femme remarquable!

MME. DE NOIRCOURT—Qui? . . . Quoi? Cendrillon, une femme remarquable? Vous êtes fou!

RANCY—Suis-je de bonne noblesse, baronne?

MME. DE NOIRCOURT—Excellente! . . . mais quel rapport?

RANCY—Ai-je une fortune appréciable?

MME. DE NOIRCOURT—Une fortune considérable. . . . Après?

RANCY—Comme homme, trouvez-vous que . . . ?

MME. DE NOIRCOURT—Je vous trouve extrêmement séduisant. Mais ensuite quoi?

RANCY—Ensuite, puisque j'ai les qualités voulues pour être un excellent parti, je demande tout simplement à devenir votre gendre!

MME. DE NOIRCOURT (écrasée)—Vous?

RANCY—Oh! ne répondez pas, je vous en prie . . . pas tout de suite au moins. Je vous confie mon idée, il n'y a pas d'objections, mais enfin je comprends qu'il faille vous y habituer. Dans deux ou trois jours, je reviendrai. . . . (Saluant la baronne, muette de colère.) Ne vous tracassez pas de la cérémonie, baronne! . . . Nous irons à la campagne, où vous voudrez, et rien qu'avec des voisins. . . . Ça sera très vite fait! Ensuite, vous n'imaginez pas combien cela rajeunit de montrer des petits enfants . . . surtout puisqu'on ne sait pas que vous avez une fille! . . .



THE WISDOM OF BETH

"SHE knows too much!" Beth's grandma said
When she was four, and shook her head
With something very like affright
What time the dear, precocious mite
Dropped oracles 'twixt slabs of bread.

At twelve, so constantly she read,
Her parents whispered, weak with dread,
Deep in the watches of the night,
"She knows too much!"

And now another decade fled
Finds Beth still wise, but safely wed
To one—I am the happy wight—
Who swears that granny spake aright,
Nor were her pa and ma misled—
She knows too much!

EDWARD W. BARNARD.

MERELY MATERIAL

By Mary S. Holbrook

DIMOCK LLOYD was an artist and a gentleman, genuine as both.

At thirty he had quenched the artist's feverish thirst for life, and was gently sipping the draught of content. He worked and slept in solitary bachelor quarters, taking his meals dutifully in the café below. He lived cheaply, comfortably, earning his living in congenial fashion, well provided with unhampering friendships of men, and cheerfully conscious of the regard of many a clever, favoring woman, whom there was no need—often no possibility—of marrying.

"A lucky fellow, Dimmie Lloyd," said everyone, "and aware of it, which is the best luck of all!"

One morning, after an hour of satisfactory work, Lloyd bethought himself of taking a walk. Remembering a poor fellow artist, exiled by scarlet fever, he adorned himself with a primrose and set out for the hospital. As he opened the door of his hotel he faced Edith Trent, who smiled a bright good morning.

"Is there a directory here?" she asked.

"Don't know. Won't I do as well?"

"Do you know where Miss Beulah Pratt lives? I've an errand there, and I know it isn't far."

Mrs. Trent was a decided young woman, well bred and well read, with a wholesome activity of habit and a fresh, outdoor manner. She was morning incarnate. She and her manly young husband were everywhere, helping, adorning, stirring, soothing. They were among Lloyd's best friends. He dined there perhaps once a week, and Edith often played

billiards with the two men, or golf in Summer.

She was tall and straight, and her husband's match in games. Prescott and she, in Lloyd's eyes, were a model couple, devoted to each other, yet prompt to welcome and include a third; united in many of their tastes, yet spicily differing. Edith wrote stories, for one thing, which Prescott would not even read. She called him her "unfeeling public"—and sometimes read Lloyd the stories.

Lloyd liked and admired her. He used to paint her for her hair and her hands. She always dressed in black.

To-day the wind had coaxed her unwilling hair into loops and lashed it against the dark hat brim above her face. Her cheeks and eyes glowed with color and light.

"Let me go with you," he said.

"I can show you better than I can direct."

"But weren't you taking a car?" She paused, her small, gloved hand black against the white door panel.

"No. I'm going to walk down town to the hospital. It's not far, and I don't get any too much exercise."

They marched off briskly, rejoicing in the glory of the day.

The Pratt house reached, he learned that her errand was brief, and went in with her. As they came out she started to turn back as they had come.

"Why must you go back?" asked Dimmie, regretfully. "Walk on with me. It will do you good."

"I must be at home to lunch. Prescott expects me. But I can walk a little way with you."

"All the way. Do! Prescott won't care. And I don't often have this opportunity."

She smiled happily without looking at him. They passed one cross street, then another, talking gaily.

"The next is the Rubicon," said Edith.

"Caesar crossed the Rubicon, you know."

"That was an unfortunate allusion," she laughed. "The poor little Rubicon would have blushed unseen to this day if he had turned back. But I shall be late, as it is. Good-bye."

"All the more reason for keeping on." Lloyd tugged gently at her outstretched hand. "Really, you don't walk enough, Edith. Let Prescott eat alone. He won't wait for you."

She strolled beside him, resisting still.

"But it's so unprincipled—real playing truant. I hate to ask my maids for a late lunch, for the example's sake."

"Lunch to the winds!" cried Lloyd, in boyish spirits. "You can lunch with me at the Burlingham. If you're hungry now I'll buy you a sandwich at the first bakeshop. Or what do you say to a cream cake?"

"No. I've really outgrown that weakness. When I was a girl I used to walk home from school to save the car-fare for cream cakes. In one shop they were 'three for five,' though smaller ones than in the 'two for five' places."

"You didn't eat them in the street?"

"Of course I did, and mamma used to wonder what stained my gloves so."

"Deceitful child! I should never have thought it possible that you could gormandize on the sly."

"That I've not outgrown. I've still a secret yearning for stolen sweets."

Her smile dimmed. He missed it, esthetically. Edith smiling was twice as paintable as Edith serious.

Quickly her merry mood returned,

and with no more feints at retreat she walked erect beside him, dimpling and glowing with the exhilaration of the morning.

But again the change came as they turned homeward from the hospital. Sudden recognition of her truancy forced itself on Edith with the clang of two o'clock from the hospital tower. She had been childish, whimsical. Perhaps Lloyd, in spite of his urging, was surprised that she had come. Would another woman—another married woman—have yielded so? "Material—material," she gave as a drug to conscience. "I can have *Ernestine* take such a walk with *Percy*. One must be free to use every chance for situations."

Lloyd was not reproaching himself—nor wondering at Edith's yielding. He felt a certain energy, mental and physical, unfamiliar of late, stealing over him—the mood of work, of inspiration. He could paint that afternoon. He grew silent with the intoxication of newly awakened ambition, that worked in his veins like the sap in budding trees. To-day the keen Autumn wind had blown on his soul, the sun had warmed and thawed his imagination, the erect young figure abreast of him stirred his senses.

He looked at her. Here was material. He must get her to stay and sit to him after luncheon. They reached the Burlingham and went in at once to the café.

In spite of their long fast and walk neither did justice to the meal. Edith appeared *distracted*. She shivered a little.

"Come up to the studio," said Lloyd, noticing this, "and we'll have a gas-log fire. You walked too far, perhaps."

She did not answer except by obeying. The pretty wavering of the morning was put by. She seemed strangely purposeless.

"By the way," Lloyd suggested, as they waited for the lift, "sha'n't I telephone Prescott that you're all right—haven't fallen into a manhole or anything? Perhaps he'll come down

himself and stay for a cup of tea. Shall I?"

"He'll hardly be there now," replied Edith, non-committally. "He said this morning that he was going off early after luncheon. I've forgotten where."

"Then let's forget all about him," said Lloyd, merrily, "and enjoy ourselves. I know just how I want to pose you. It's going to be the best yet. Now lie down on that divan in the corner—wait, let me spread the black bearskin over it; it is just the day to paint black things—they're fairly opalesque in this light. Are you warm now? If not, here's this purple affair for your shoulders. Don't muffle your hands, though. There! how's that? Now keep still."

For an hour he painted with fervor, scarcely speaking except for directions, till at last he noticed how completely Edith's color had vanished, and feared she was tired.

He sprang up with compunction and poured out a glass of sherry.

"You poor thing!" he exclaimed, "why didn't you warn me I was painting you to death? Drink this, now, and I'll call a cab to drive you home."

She held out a shaking hand for the wineglass, but her eyes were steady as she looked into his.

"No, Dimmie; don't—*drive* me home."

The treble of a laugh made her voice uneven. She drank the wine, he wondering. Then she got up from the couch and stood like a humble queen before him.

"Let me stay with you—always, Dimmie."

"Good heavens, Edith! what do you mean?" He stared blankly at her.

"Don't you care for me?" she asked, with tender reproach. "Don't you love me a little, Dimmie? I—I can't keep from telling you any longer how much I—love you!"

Lloyd's astonishment brought forth the crudest speech of his life.

"Why, Edith," he exclaimed, "I thought you were in love with Prescott!"

She smiled the smile of one who can afford to be generous.

"Oh, Prescott!" she murmured, softly. "You know what Prescott is. One has to begin with a husband, of course, and Prescott is a very becoming one for me. But one doesn't end with a husband, does one? Do you want *me* to, Dimmie?"

It took his breath away to see how sure of him she was. What had he done? What could he do now? Or rather—since there was but one thing to do—how best do that? Treat her as if her mind were wandering?

"Edith, my dear girl," he said, kindly, taking one of her chill hands in his, "you are not yourself. You're overdone. I've kept you too long in a strained position. I forgot all about the time, once I got to sketching you."

He laughed an easy apology. "Let me go out for Dr. Hunt, and you go in there and be comfortable on the bed. I'll send up one of the maids with some tea, or salts, or anything."

She looked at him with growing distance in her eyes.

"Dimmie Lloyd," she said, "how can you treat me so, after this morning—after everything? You've given me every reason to love you and to make me think you love me. What does it all mean—all you say about me?"

She scanned his face wistfully.

"Why, you're simply tremendous material, Edith, don't you see? Of course I like you awfully, and you're one of my very best friends; but I've been an ass indeed if my shop talk about your coloring and all that has made you think—Pshaw! it hasn't, Edith! it can't have! You're too sensible a woman to believe any such thing. Tell me you're playing some kind of joke—"

Her whole manner changed. A different woman stood where she had been—a woman with flinty eyes and almost professional composure of bearing.

She laughed. "Of course it's a joke, poor, innocent Dimmie! *You're* material, too, for *my* art. Stupid of

you, wasn't it, not to see I was making *you* pose all the time? My things, please!"

Lloyd, only half-relieved, still puzzled, helped her into her fashionable little jacket.

"I thought there must be something at the bottom of it," he stammered, awkwardly.

"Yes, you see I'd been longing to make one of my heroines propose, and I couldn't seem to have it come about naturally. I couldn't hear the words or see how the man would take it.

Now I can do it from life. Oh, don't think of coming down with me. I know you want to fill in your sketch. It's been amply worth the price of playing truant. Aren't you glad, Dimmie, that I *wasn't* serious?"

She gave him her hand lightly, and not waiting for the lift, she ran down the stairs.

Dimmie did not go back to his canvas that afternoon. "I'll be hanged if I know!" he said, over and over to himself. "I'll be hanged if I know!"



DREAM-SENSE

'TWAS but a dream—a wondrous dream,
 A short-lived dream of love;
 We drifted down a silver stream,
 The full moon shone above.
 The girl I'd loved, but never told,
 In that light looked divine;
 My timid heart for once grew bold—
 I asked her to be mine.
 I told my dream—it would not keep—
 Next day, and thus she spake:
 "You seem to have more sense asleep
 Than when you are awake!"

GEORGE BIRDSEYE.



HAPPY THOUGHT

SHE—They say that new photographer can take a beautiful picture of a homely person.

HE—Indeed? He ought to advertise himself as a "painless photographer."



ENFORCED CONSTANCY

VARIETY in love is simply human,
 To take a new love and an old to leave;
 One man, and one alone, has loved one woman—
 That man was Adam and that woman Eve.

A SNOW STORM IN AUGUST

By Frank Roe Batchelder

"I DON'T believe you ever cared, after all," said Joe, bitterly.

"Really?" said Molly, coolly.

She drummed on the arm of the piazza chair and looked dreamily out over the sparkling sea.

"Why are you so provoking, dear? You've all but given your promise, yet you put me off and tantalize me and lead me along as if I were a pet animal with no will of its own."

"Don't be silly, Joe."

"Silly! Well, I am silly; I'm a— a fool. A fool!" he repeated, fiercely, suppressing the expletive.

"Oh, no, Joe," said the imperturbable Molly; "not so bad as that."

Joe cooled a little and renewed his pleadings.

"Molly, you know how much I love you. Here I've followed you to Ormond in February—the busiest month in the year. I tell you the governor was sulky about my leaving. You know why I came here—because you told me that when we could pick roses in Winter—"

"Greenhouses barred," interjected Molly.

"—you'd consider it seriously."

"And the wicked frost killed all the Ormond roses before you came!" concluded Molly, exasperatingly.

Silence for a few moments. Molly was serene, Joe cross.

It was a beautiful day. People were riding bicycles on the hard sand beach; a few heads were bobbing in the rollers; in the hotel office Mr. Price was telling one of his best stories to a guest, who was laughing immoderately. Everybody was content—except Joe.

"Molly!" he said.

No answer. "La—la, la—la, la—la, la," hummed Molly, from the "Cavalleria."

"See here, Molly," said Joe, desperately, "I'm in dead earnest now. I've got to go back to-night, and you've got to give me some sort of a definite answer. I'm not made of iron. I love you and I want you to be my wife, and I'm willing to wait until you've had all the frisking round that you want; but I must have an answer—straight. If you're playing with me, say so and we'll call it quits. If you don't intend to throw me over, tell me when you'll give me a positive answer, and I'll wait patiently."

"Joe," drawled the mischievous Molly, "I will give you—a positive answer—positively—when it snows in August."

Joe picked up his hat with an exclamation of disgust.

"North Pole barred?" he inquired, sarcastically.

"Nothing barred, Joe," said Molly, sweetly.

Joe was too angry to continue the conversation. He strolled off, muttering to himself and heading for the shady path in the woods. He wanted to recover his temper if he could.

Molly still drummed and hummed.

Presently a bevy of girls rushed round the corner of the hotel and chorused: "Come, Molly, put your sweater on, an' we'll all take to the tee!"

The invitation roused Molly from her dreams, and a little later she was on her way to the links, with golf uppermost in her mind.

The truth about it—the root of the whole trouble—was that while Molly loved Joe, she didn't want to marry him—yet. Freedom meant “fun”—travel, golf, admirers, everything. She couldn't bear the thought of settling down and managing a house. And Joe was so impetuous, so ardent that she knew she must keep him at arm's length, or it would all be over.

Her promise to answer “when the roses bloomed in Winter” was a subterfuge to gain time, which she had employed three months before. She hadn't thought of Florida then, and Joe would now have brought her face to face with her promise but for the frost that killed the roses—and the orange blossoms!

Ormond was paradise; and there would be other Ormonds. There must be some excuse to gain time, so her mischievous fancy hit on a snowstorm in August. She reflected that she had no intention of joining a Peary relief expedition, and concluded it safe to try one more delay. She didn't want to lose Joe, after all; but Molly was artful. She knew the shy bird would surely be hunted.

Joe went back to New York that night with an air of being deeply injured, but not without a decently spoken good-bye. And Molly's good-bye was most kind. She whispered, “I'll not forget the snowstorm, Joe.”

Joe did some deep thinking on his way home. He was a substantial fellow with brains, and he reasoned with himself seriously. “She isn't flirting,” he soliloquized, “but she's wild and doesn't want to be a tame bird in a cage. However, I'm not going a thousand miles for Winter roses hereafter. Now for a new game.”

He had resolved to keep silent for a time and perhaps bring Molly to terms thereby.

But all New York doesn't go to Ormond in February. His cousins, the Wentworths, were entertaining their Denver friend, Miss Constance Delorme, that Winter, and Joe was in frequent demand to help amuse the guest. He not only helped entertain, but was, in fact, amazingly

well entertained himself. Dances, masquerades, opera—at all he figured as attendant on Miss Delorme, until people began to speak of the intimacy between them. One of Molly's friends kindly wrote her some gossip of this nature.

“Pshaw!” said Molly, “Joe's just being clever and agreeable. Can't worry me that way.” Yet the rumor had given her a little start—she began to think that she mustn't tease Joe too long.

Meanwhile Joe was having a jolly time, and perhaps he did find more satisfaction in Miss Delorme's lively society than he would have thought possible two months before.

There was nothing to justify it, nevertheless the rumor of an engagement followed in due course. If Miss Delorme heard it, she gave no sign; possibly it was not displeasing to her. But when Molly returned to New York Joe had gone on an extended Western trip to look after some of “the governor's” mining property. Of course it was only decent for him to call on Miss Delorme when he passed through Denver, and Miss Delorme mentioned his pleasant visit there—the call was protracted to a week's stay—in corresponding with the Wentworths, and the Wentworths spoke of it, so that news, too, reached Molly's ears.

Secretly she felt hurt and injured; outwardly she only smiled. Few letters had passed between her and Joe, and neither had alluded specifically to their sentimental relations. After a time Joe ceased to write; of course Molly followed suit.

The fascinations of Miss Delorme had made some impression on Joe, but in spite of all he was not prepared to be “off with the old and on with the new.”

When Summer came, however, Joe and Molly had not met for months, and each looked on the other as at fault—seriously at fault. Joe's grievance was an old one, Molly's was new.

Newport claimed Molly, and then Bar Harbor. Joe avoided both; made a stag trip to Atlantic City with some

cronies, and went fishing in the Adirondacks.

At Bar Harbor Molly ran into a group of Ormond acquaintances. They were going the following week to the White Mountains, and Molly must go with them. They would not hear denial. And so they took a train over the mountains, and landed at dusk on the piazza of the Sunset House. Mr. Price met them with a hospitable Ormond welcome, and some Boston people, who regularly "did" Ormond in Winter and the Sunset in Summer, were there also.

In the morning Molly looked across the charming intervale and saw Mount Washington looming up before her, impressive and noble. She followed the bridle path up Mount Stickney, and breathed in the delights of her surroundings—very nearly happy; not quite, for freedom and fun didn't seem so alluring as they had at Ormond.

She was one of the party that made the ascent of Mount Washington a few days later. The little engine puffed and wheezed; the cogs underneath jolted and jarred the little car, and up, up, up they went, into the sky.

At the same time the Sunset party was jolting up Jacob's Ladder a file of sturdy young men in outing costume climbed the footpath that leads up to the mountain from another hotel. They had started early, but the climb was a hard one—"something to do just once," Jack Somerby declared.

When the climbers, dusty and road-stained, reached the summit and entered the hotel that manages to find anchorage there, they were eager for dinner. Hurried ablutions preceded their entrance to the dining-room, where the Sunset tourists were already at table. Joe led the march of the pedestrians into the room, and Molly, at the far end, saw him find a seat with the other fellows and fall to eating the not impossible dinner with a ravenous appetite. Clearly, Joe was not skipping any meals because of heart trouble. He did not recognize

Molly in the throng of diners—in fact, Joe was too hungry just then to think of anything but satisfying the inner man.

But dinner was over in time and all the tourists went outside to have a final look about before preparing to descend the mountain. Then Joe saw Molly leaning by the railing, muffled in a wrap, for it was cold up there and a searching wind blew. He went to her immediately. They greeted each other in a friendly way, but constrainedly. Each was thinking of the last time they had met—on the piazza at Ormond. They chatted of their travels, but without mention of Denver, and as they talked the air grew darker and it seemed colder.

Far below them the intervale lay smiling in the bright sunshine. They could see the Sunset House nestling at the foot of Mount Stickney and the Ammonoosuc, like a silver ribbon, winding in and out. The peaks about them were bare and unfriendly by contrast.

A whirling, feathery flake of whiteness came aimlessly down and fell on Molly's glove. It melted quickly and lay on the soft kid like a tear. Molly stopped her chatter—she was thinking.

But there were other flakes. In the space of a minute the air was full of them and the sunny vista below was shut out. It was only a seasonable snowstorm on the top of Mount Washington.

Joe was thinking, too—of other mountains. In recollection he saw Pike's Peak, and Denver—and—Miss Delorme, but somehow they seemed very far off.

He turned to Molly, whose face was muffled in the collar of her coat.

"We'd better go inside," he said.

"Yes," assented Molly.

They looked at the photographs and souvenirs on sale in the hotel office, and stopped before a handsome advertising calendar.

Joe pointed to the figures that stood for the day.

It was the twenty-fifth of August.

"It's so close in here," said Molly;

"let's go outside again." She was thinking of Miss Delorme.

They were alone in the still furious snowstorm when they stepped out on the platform. The other tourists preferred shelter.

"Yes," said Joe, tremulously, "it's the twenty-fifth of August."

"And we're not at the North Pole, either," said Molly, with a flash of her old manner.

"So you remember?" said Joe.

"Dear Joe," said Molly, suddenly, taking both his hands, "they told me—they told me about—about Denver, you know; but I don't care. Perhaps you are sorry you came here,

perhaps you are sorry it snowed; but, if you are not——"

So it was all understood in a few moments.

"I think," said Joe, as the pedestrians entered the car with the Sunset party to make the descent by rail, "that meeting by accident changed my luck. If I'd followed you here, most likely the thermometer would have registered ninety degrees."

"Well," said Molly, archly, "there was a frost at Ormond, Joe, but it really snows in August—sometimes."

"Yes," said Joe, grimly; "but it's lucky nothing was barred—we might have had to go to the North Pole."



HIS DECEIVING EARSIGHT

SHE—I thought that the Rev. Mr. Crossroads was expecting a call to a city church.

HE—So he was, but after the members of the city church heard his trial sermon they came to the conclusion that he had missed his calling.



CERTAINLY CARELESS

FORRESTER—Mrs. Plainleigh says her husband is of a retiring disposition.

LANCASTER—Very likely. He must have been dreaming when he married her.



HAD DONE HER BEST

MAY—Cholly Gotrox is in love with me and doesn't know it.

GRACE—Well, don't worry, my dear; it isn't your fault.



OUT OF THE ORDINARY

MISS GUSHLEIGH—She is beautiful, isn't she?

VAN SHARP—Ye—es; but she is brighter than she looks.